

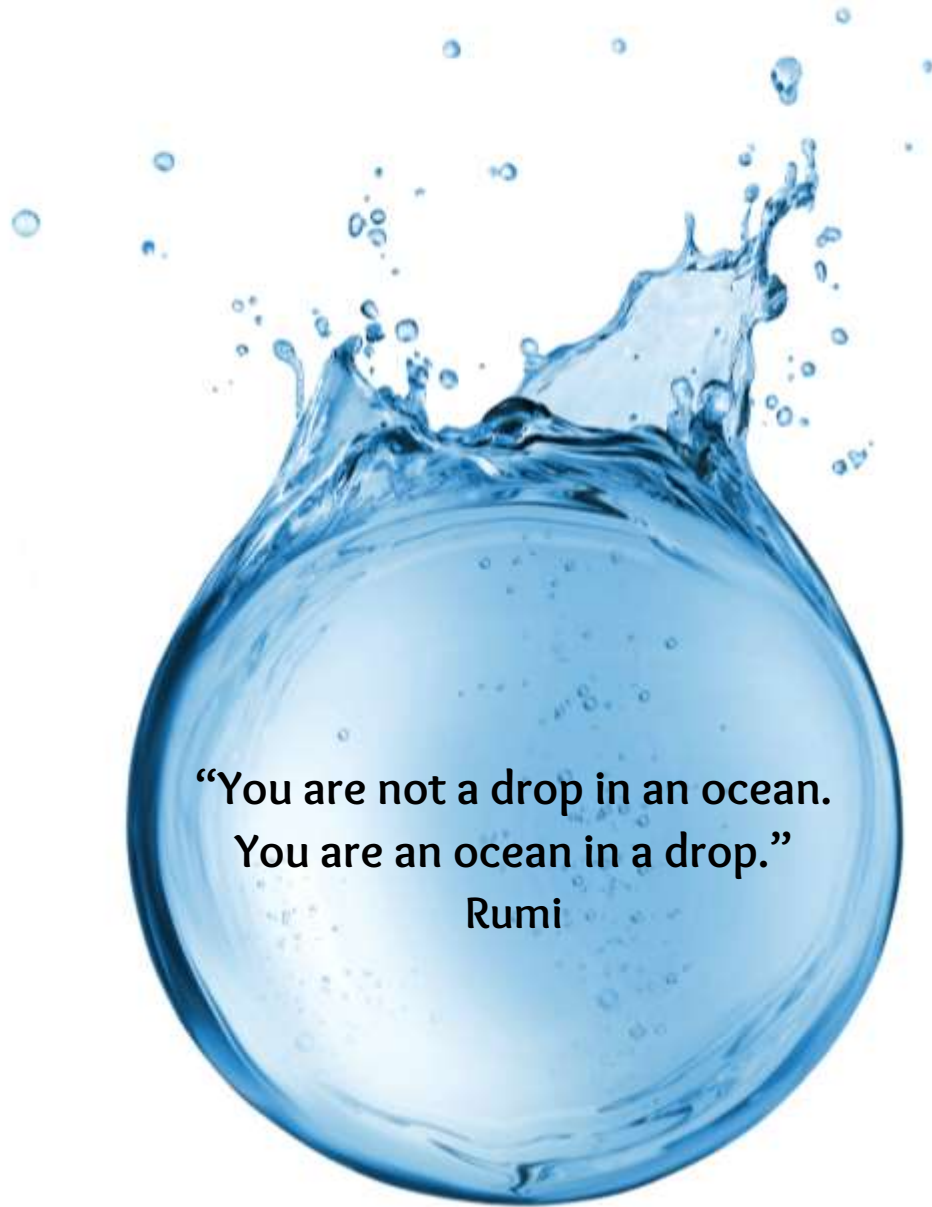


Thriving with Grace

Life of Freedom and Unabashed Joy

Niloo Soleimani

June 2022



**“You are not a drop in an ocean.
You are an ocean in a drop.”
Rumi**

**Dedicated to my dearest friend and soul
companion, Sepi who opened my eyes.**

**My eternal gratitude to Bonnie Glass, my amazing friend for
editing this book and also for helping me see it is possible to
be Love even in a cutthroat work environment. Thank you for
being you and for being in my life.**

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Preface

***My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive;
and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.***

Maya Angelou

Author, Poet, Dancer, Producer, Playwright, Director

As COVID19 momentarily stopped our feverish rat race, we realized what insane and unsustainable lives we've been living. And now that it is somewhat under control, at least in first world countries like the US and Canada, it is as if the momentary pause was a glitch in the system that has now been fixed! We are back at it again, people (not hamsters) in the wheel, pushing ourselves to our limit, just to maintain our heads above water and to survive life.

We wonder is this what life is about? Getting up, getting to work, working in a job we most likely dislike, if not hate, getting back home, spending a few hours with family, drop dead tired in bed and wake up the next day, doing it all over again? In the middle of it all deal with painful challenges and surprises that constantly hit us. Well, don't you feel like a hamster in the wheel?

- Aren't you tired of the monotony of it, the dreariness of it, always looking forward to the weekends or vacations?
- Don't you wish you had a job you were passionate about, doing what you love to do and getting well paid for it?

What if you could live a life of joy and happiness, instead of putting up with dour existence?

In *Grace Under Fire – Awakening* (here after known as ***Awakening***), I gave you the knowledge and practices that empowered you to manage your life with wisdom, grace and ease. **In this book, you will learn the wisdom, tools and practices you need to blossom and thrive, to live a life of joy and bliss, from an empowered place of love.**

Is it possible? Yes! In 2017, I had a nervous breakdown and lost everything – a high paying job, my home, and most importantly, custody of my son who is my life. I was distraught and hopeless. I had done everything right. Why was this happening to me, I kept asking myself.

A friend of mine invited me to stay with her for a few months to get back up on my feet. Sepi, my amazing friend was taking me to the airport and she answered my question and bam! It was as if ice water was poured over my flaming head, cooling me to sanity. Since then, being immersed in this wisdom has allowed me live a life of deep joy, filled with love, freedom and abundance.

Is this something you are ready for?

I do want to clarify that this is not a book about Enlightenment, though you may have such an experience contemplating the wisdom of this book as it has been gathered from authentic spiritual sources. It is about thriving and living with unabashed joy NOW, in the present moment.

“I belong to no religion. My religion is Love. Every heart is my temple”

Rumi

And so, it is for me. I do not follow a particular religion, except the Path of Love and cite wisdom from all over the world that point to Oneness that is Love.

Thriving with Grace is the result of five years of research and study on teachings of renowned gurus/ masters/teachers (listed in the back of the book), and in deep contemplation and dialogue with my amazing friend, Sepi who first introduced me to this wisdom.

When I first heard about this wisdom, I knew it to be Divine Truth (vs. Ego’s beliefs or truths.) This wisdom hits you smack in the heart and rests deeply in your soul. Afterwards, nothing is the same and everything is transformed.

I have researched and studied various sources, thousands of hours of listening to audiobooks and YouTube videos. The wisdom is quite old and there’s nothing new here. What makes this book different is the fact that it is from sacred sources of all religions and spiritual practices, distilled and **precisely** mapped to show you the way to Divine Love and Grace.

Divine Grace in Christianity is the free and unmerited favor of God. We were meant to thrive with SATI’s (Source of All That Is) infinite love. And I show you how in this book. If the time has come for a radical change of direction and some deep introspection, please read on.

This is my gift of Love to you; may it reach you heart and soul and empower you to blossom, thrive and live a life of deep joy. May it also extend beyond us to envelop the entire planet and all its beautiful inhabitants.

*Please also note that this book builds on the wisdom and knowledge of **Awakening**. Without that knowledge and understanding, the wisdom covered in this book may be difficult to grasp. So please read or review it before reading this book. It will make a lot more sense.*

Namaste and Love,

Niloo Soleimani

Chapter 1: The World of Ten Thousand Things

*“From the Tao came oneness;
And from oneness came twoness.
Then from twoness came threeness;
And from threeness came
The world of ten thousand things.”*

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

Duality/Polarity

Our world or the “World of Ten Thousand Things,” as named by the legendary Lao Tzu, is a world of opposites and duality. If you look closely, (and I did for over 6 months) EVERYTHING has an opposite: good/bad, light/dark, up/down, right/left, right/wrong, etc. In this world, opposites define each other and one cannot exist without the other.

The above poem continues:

*“Because the Tao cannot be known
and oneness cannot be explained,
Opposites and differences
define and explain each other.
And their shifting balance
maintains the harmony of things.
The ten thousand things
carry the Yin
and embrace the Yang.
Together they harmonize as Breath.”*

Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu



In Chinese spirituality, Taoism (pronounced Daoism), Yin-Yang is the symbol duality, of the two complementary forces that make up all aspects and phenomena of life. Yin is a symbol of earth, femaleness, darkness, passivity, and absorption. Yang represents heaven, maleness, light, activity, and penetration. The two are both said to proceed from the Source of All That Is (SATI); their interplay on one another (as one increases the other decreases) being a description of the actual process of the universe and all that is in it. In harmony, the two are depicted as the light and dark halves of a circle.

“The white dot in the black area and the black dot in the white area connote **coexistence and unity of opposites to form a whole**. The curvy line signifies that there are no absolute separations between the two opposites. The yin-yang symbol, then, embodies both sides:

duality, paradox, unity in diversity, change, and harmony.” Jun Shan¹

Yin and yang depict the universe that is governed by a cosmic duality, **sets of two opposing and complementing principles** or cosmic energies that can be observed in this world.

“The Spiritual Law of Duality basically states that everything is on a continuum and has a complementary opposite within the whole. To use an old adage, there may be two sides of a coin but there is only one coin. In other words, things that appear as opposites are in fact only two extremes of the same thing. For instance, heat and cold may appear to be opposites at first glance, but in truth, they are simply varying degrees of the same thing.”²

Our world is a world of complementary opposites and duality.

“Silence is not the absence of something but the presence of everything.”

John Grossmann,

Author of One Square Inch of Silence

Music is the combination of sounds and silences; there is no music without the silences; the silence allows the music to be felt and understood. If you had never gotten ill, you would never know and appreciate your health, right? Therefore, opposites are necessary in this World of Ten Thousand Things.

However, most of us prefer one thing and not its opposite, firmly believing that **one can exist without the other**, but secretly fearing that the opposite will arrive sooner or later. Yes?

The most important of all dualities is the experience of life that is comprised of pain and pleasure. As Roger Castillo, one of my non-duality teachers says:

“The flow of life is always an ebb and flow of pleasure and pain. Someone helps you out: pleasure. Someone lets you down: pain. It is often our actions or the actions of the other which form part of the flow of outcomes which is the flow of pleasure or pain.”

The flow of Life is always either pleasure or pain.

But the Ego Mind CRAVES pleasure and is actually addicted to it. If you are not sure about this, please refer to **Awakening** where I explain the Ego Mind.

“All cravings are the mind seeking salvation or fulfillment in external things, and in the future as a substitute for the joy of Being.”

Eckhart Tolle, Power of Now

Therefore, we experience suffering because we have expectations and attachments to outcomes (wanting life to go a certain way, OUR way) or have worry and anxiety (about not getting what we want.)

¹ ThoughtCo, <https://www.thoughtco.com/yin-and-yang-629214>

² The Soul Medic, <https://www.thesoulmedic.com/the-spiritual-law-of-duality/>

Positionality

“Positionality is the social and political context that creates your identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability status. Positionality also describes how your identity influences, and potentially biases, your understanding of and outlook on the world.”³

According to Merriam Webster dictionary positional is defined as:

“of, relating to, or fixed by position.”⁴

Here, in this context what I mean by positionality is taking a position based on our identity and Belief System (BS).

We live most of our life in our head and Ego continuously takes a position (pro vs. con) on EVERYTHING! It uses tactics and strategies to accomplish its goals, including competition, comparison, criticism, secretiveness, shame, pride and resentment.

The Ego mind thrives on taking positions and arguing against or for something. The following super charge the Ego and give it power:

I am right/You are wrong
I'm good, this is good/You are bad, it is bad
I'm better than you/You're worse than me
I'm superior/You're inferior

I had known about duality for a while but I didn't quite get it until the fight between Palestinians and Jews flared up again a few years ago. We were all upset and hurting for both the Palestinians and Jews. Many took sides, blaming one or another, judging one or the other.

Then it dawned on me! This is not the Way of Love. Palestinians and Jews are stuck in an eternal dance of hatred and judgements. Neither side is good or bad and both are good and bad. The only way out of this perpetual dance of duality is Love!

Positionality (and this me vs. them) creates division and separation and is the cause of most suffering in the world. It creates barriers to the experience and expression of Love, which is the most powerful energy in the universe.

David Takacs, associate professor at California State University, Monterey Bay explains:

“Few things are more difficult than to see outside the bounds of your own perspective — to be able to identify assumptions that you take as universal truths but which, instead, have been crafted by your own unique identity and experiences in the world.”⁵

Do you see that? Have you noticed how being right is more important than Love and peace? The Ego loves it! Of course! But your True Self, Divine Life is dimmed when you do. Taking a position

³ <https://www.dictionary.com/e/gender-sexuality/positionality/>

⁴ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/positional>

⁵ David Takacs, “How Does Your Positionality Bias Your Epistemology?”, https://repository.uchastings.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2260&context=faculty_scholarship

costs you Love in your relationships, your wellbeing and vitality.

We will discuss pragmatic ways to reduce if not eliminate the power of Ego and its positionality in chapter 7.

Causality

We live in a world of causality or cause and effect, meaning one event, process, state or object (a cause) contributes to the formation of another event, process, state or object (an effect). The cause is partly responsible for the effect, and the effect is partly dependent on the cause.

Therefore, causality is the observation that everything that happens is preceded by what appears to be its cause, that, to me, implies that nothing happens without a cause. Simply said: action leads to a reaction that then has a consequence.

Nisargadatta Maharaj, the renowned 20th century yogi explains:

“Causation means succession in time of events in space, the space being physical or mental. Time, space, causations are mental categories, arising and subsiding with the mind.”⁶

Example 1:

You say hello to someone and they ignore you and pass on by. It's easy to think, “he doesn't respect me. He doesn't even answer my hellos.” Then you find out he's been in a car accident and trying to figure out what to do next.

Perception: No response to your hello → He doesn't respect me

Reality: He's deep in his own thoughts → He doesn't notice you saying hello

Example 2:

Your boss is frowning and is harsh when she talks to you. You think “she doesn't like me because I'm XYZ.” You get pissed and tell her she's biased and has never like you, etc. etc. Then she tells you she's just found out she has cancer.

Perception: Boss frowning and harsh → she doesn't like me because I'm XYZ → She's biased

Reality: Boss has found out she has cancer → she's upset and not in control of her emotions.

Example 3:

This morning at a train stop near the hospital, a man and his three young kids got on. The kids were loud and completely out of control, running from one end of the train car to the other. An annoyed passenger sitting next to me looked over at the man said, “parents these days don't discipline their kids and let them do whatever they want. The man heard and answered with tears in his eyes, “The doc just told me their mother isn't going to make it. Sorry, I'm just trying to think before we all sit down at home to talk about this.”

Perception: Man is not stopping his kids from running around → parents don't discipline their

⁶ Nisargadatta Teachings, <http://srinisargadattamaharaj.com/nisargadatta-teachings/real-world-is-beyond-the-mind/>

kids these days → He's irresponsible!

Reality: Man found out his wife is dying → He's too fraught to control his kids and thinking how to break the news to them.

Example 4:

Every time I _____, it _____. You can fill in the blank, we all say this, yes?

Every time I sit to write, the phone rings! Is there a real causality here?

As you can see, causality is one of the central notions in our concept of the world. But is it truly real? We **think** the things and events we experience are connected, and have a causal relationship. We see events follow one another, and often conclude that one caused the other.

However, it is not as though we can prove some sort of force passing from one to the other. Even in the case of our own actions, we are strikingly unable to explain how a decision to ask a question brings about motion in our bodies. The fallacy occurs when a causal connection is assumed without proof. While sometimes there is a connection between A and B, it doesn't mean A causes B.

Also, what caused the **first** cause? If you trace back the cause of any event or process, you can see that you cannot find the first cause.

Philosophers David Hume and Kant contemplate on this concept in detail, which I will not mention as to not bore you to death or put you in a coma! 😊 Basically,

“Kant saw that Hume's argument is valid and was provoked by its astounding conclusion – **that causal necessity has neither an empirical nor a logical foundation** – into writing his Critique of Pure Reason (1781). The whole of this revolutionary work was, he wrote, an attempt to solve Hume's problem. Kant's solution was radical: **the nature of the world as we experience it is dependent on the nature of our apparatus for experiencing. The “objects of the senses must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition.**[Emphasis added]”⁷

Causality or existence of cause-and-effect only exists in the rational observing mind. Cause-and-effect is the technique that the mind employs to 'understand' what is seen. Without identifying a cause for what is observed, the mind is dumbfounded.

I will add that quite often, the Ego mind uses causality to determine **degree of responsibility and degree of blame**. It uses causality to avoid responsibility and justify blaming others. “It's not my fault!”, “She did it!” Causality invokes positionality and division.

Causality (existence of cause-and-effect) only exists in the observing mind. However, it does not exist in reality! Thinking in terms of cause-and-effect creates positionality and division which lead to suffering.

⁷ Greenstreet, Stuart, “Kant versus Hume on the Necessary Connection”
https://philosophynow.org/issues/49/Kant_versus_Hume_on_the_Necessary_Connection

Happiness

If you survey humans and ask, what do you want most in life, chances are you will find that most people, at the root of it, want happiness (and they believe doing this or that, achieving this or that, will make them happy) or bring peace of mind/inner peace (a state of not being at the mercy of Life's circumstance).

Denise Waite, in the book *Back to the Truth: 5000 Years of Advaita* explains:

“For many people, the sense of meaning in their lives relates solely to a constant striving to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Any sense of purpose is often confused with this and may frequently be summed up simply as a desire ‘to be happy.’”⁸

Sri Ramesh Balsekar, a disciple of Nisargadatta Maharaj further expands:

“The concept of ‘time’ and the flow of time brought with it the concept of purpose, the investment of effort and the expectation of the result of the effort. And surely this is the very basis of one’s daily living, beginning with going to school, then the university and the end of education; then falling in love and marriage, to be followed by the happy family; in the meantime, one’s career, again a beginning, middle and end, with the purpose of eventual “success.” Thus, daily living gets based essentially on time: purpose - effort -expectation. Success means happiness; failure means frustration, unhappiness.”⁹

Please note, pleasure is **not** the same as happiness. Continuous pleasure is NOT possible. In the *World of Ten Thousand Things*, the world of duality, pleasure is always followed by pain, the “high” is always followed by the “low”.

However, **continuous happiness is possible.**

According to Wikipedia, “The term happiness is used in the context of mental or emotional states, including positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. It is also used in the context of life satisfaction, subjective well-being, eudaimonia, flourishing and well-being.”¹⁰

“Happiness for the human being in practical terms is continuous unbroken peace of mind regardless of circumstance”

Sri Ramesh Balsekar

Is it possible to have unbroken peace of mind? Yes, absolutely!! In fact, more than that, bliss, “a state of complete happiness or joy”¹¹ is possible.

“The partner of pleasure is pain.

Bliss has no opposite.”

Georgi Y. Johnson

⁸ Dennis Waite, *Back to the Truth, 5000 Years of Advaita*, Kindle Edition, 2007, ISBN 9781846946240

⁹ Ramesh Balsekar, *Peace and Harmony in Daily Living*, 2002, ISBN 81-901059-8-1

¹⁰ Wikipedia - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happiness>

¹¹Online dictionary Vocabulary.com, <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/bliss>

Bliss, a state of complete joy is possible!

Life will toss us around like a tiny sailboat in a storm at sea with pleasure (up) and pain (down). We often just react, and exist only at the whim of our circumstance. **Awakening** covered how to find peace of mind in the midst of life's storms.

This book will take it a step further, into the mysterious waters of non-duality and quantum physics, into a spiritual realm, where the laws of "reality," this "World of Ten Thousand Things" fall apart and a new existence becomes possible.

So, get ready!! We're going to go down deep into the rabbit hole!

But first, pause and contemplate. Every chapter will include a Pause and Contemplate section, giving you a chance to digest the material. Please take the opportunity to do the practices I list here to help deepen your understanding of the material. Make a diary or journal of your thoughts and experience. I called mine **Diaries of Awakening!** And having a diary was critical in my understanding of the journey I was taking.

Pause, Investigate and Contemplate

1. Look at your own life and the world. Investigate/notice the duality you experience. Make a list with two columns and write them down. Do you experience the up and down? Do you have expectations or want things to go a certain way?
2. Look at the area in your life where you place blame on others? Are you using causality to determine degree of responsibility and degree of blame? Aren't these just stories you made up? Follow the effect to cause all the way back to the original cause. What do you see?
3. Where in life do you take a stand and a firm position? What is the impact and cost of this positionality?
4. Contemplate what is it that you most want from life, for your life?

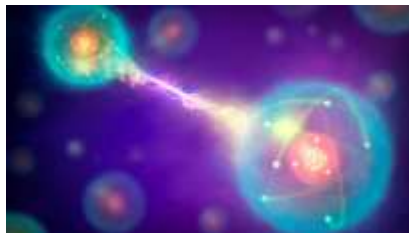
Chapter 2: Spooky Action Is it Halloween?!

“Those who are not shocked when they first come across quantum theory cannot possibly have understood it.”

Niels Bohr, Essays

Quantum Physics (QP) basics are reasonably simple and quite complicated at the same time! Simple to understand. There are hundreds of books and videos for all levels and ages. It is quite complicated because we cannot fathom and accept what the science reveals. Understanding the World of Quantum Physics will definitely distort what you consider “reality,” if not shatter it completely.

In ***Awakening***, I covered a bit about the science of QP. Let’s review the basics. The advancement in QP has shown that particles don’t behave in the same way as the laws of the physical universe and that there are laws in the universe that define the interaction of energy and matter in the quantum field. Any subatomic particle, like any particle in the three-dimensional space, obeys the laws of quantum mechanics. (You might want to review concepts of quantum entanglement, double slit experiment, the observer effect and collapse of the wave function in ***Awakening***. You can also Google them.)



In 1982, physicist, Alain Aspect and Aspect and his team performed what may turn out to be one of the most important experiments of the 20th century and discovered Quantum Entanglement or the “spooky action” of quantum particles.

Quantum entanglement — or “spooky action at a distance,” as Albert Einstein famously called it — is the idea that the fates of tiny particles are linked to each other even if they’re separated by long distances. Basically, each particle always seems to know what the other is doing; The state of two particles linked together remains the same no matter how far apart they are in space.

Scientists still can't explain how the particles are linked. Is it wormholes? An unknown dimension?

Or the power of love?



“The problem with this feat is that it violates Einstein's long-held tenet that no communication can travel faster than the speed of light. Since traveling faster than the speed of light is tantamount to breaking the time barrier, this daunting prospect has caused some physicists to try to come up with elaborate ways to explain away Aspect's findings. But it has inspired others to offer even more radical explanations.”¹²

Let’s delve deeper into the “rabbit hole!” Be prepared to be awed (another word for freaked

¹² Michael Talbot, The Universe as a Hologram, Does Objective Reality Exist, or is the Universe a Phantasm?
<http://www.earthportals.com/hologram.html>

out!!!) by the strangeness, yet, perfection of it! I was!

The Quantum Field

The quantum field is an invisible field of energy and information that exists beyond time and space. Nothing physical or material exists there. It is beyond anything we can perceive with our senses. With the advent of quantum physics, scientists realized that subatomic particles obey a different set of rules. Max Planck, the father of Quantum Theory, describes the subatomic particles as “a field that connects everything”. This energy field is called the Quantum Field.

In this field, multiple possibilities occupy the same space, and exist simultaneously. The act of observing the quantum possibilities is what forces the particles to appear and manifest. One of the most famous experiments in physics is the double slit experiment. It demonstrates with unparalleled strangeness, that little particles are waves until the very act of observing turns them into matter. It's as though the electrons "know" whether you're watching them or not. Therefore, the very act of observing this setup changes the outcome of the experiment.

Brian Koberlein, astrophysicist and physics professor at Rochester Institute of Technology summarizes the whole thing very nicely:

“The duality between particles and waves is a central part of quantum theory. Light is clearly a wave: it has a wavelength that determines its color, and light waves can interact with each other to produce things like lasers. Light is also clearly a particle: it interacts with atoms as discrete photons; a single photon can be deflected like a billiard ball. Particle-wave duality means that quantum objects like light have a symmetry between their particle and wave aspects. They are particles with wave properties and waves with particle properties. They are both, and they are neither. The power of quantum theory is that you don't need to distinguish between particles and waves. They are simply quantum objects with a duality between their particle and wave natures.”¹³

Here's a QP joke:

*I didn't know Trump was a quantum physicist!
He thinks he can change the outcome of the election by observing it!*



Not funny? Okay, I put these jokes in so your eyes don't glaze over and you don't get bored!!

Anyway, In the 1700s, René Descartes, the famous French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist who invented analytic geometry, proposed that the very act of thinking about one's existence is evidence of the presence of a consciousness *distinct* from the body. QP, however, refutes this notion. The double slit experiment (that has been replicated hundreds of times,) shows us that consciousness, through the act of observation, plays a critical role in our world and creating our reality. Basically, QP disrupts the subject/object paradigm: there can, in fact, be no separation between the two.

¹³ Brian Koberlein , “What It Means to Live in a Holographic Universe”, <https://nautil.us/blog/what-it-means-to-live-in-a-holographic-universe>

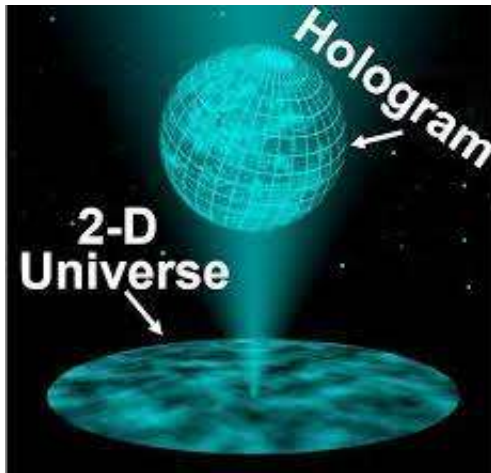
“The universe and the observer exist as a pair. You can say that the universe is there only when there is an observer who can say, yes, I see the universe there.

Andrei Linde

Stanford University physicist¹⁴

Kinda makes sense, right? Duality is the characteristic of this world.

Quantum Physics and Holographic Universe!



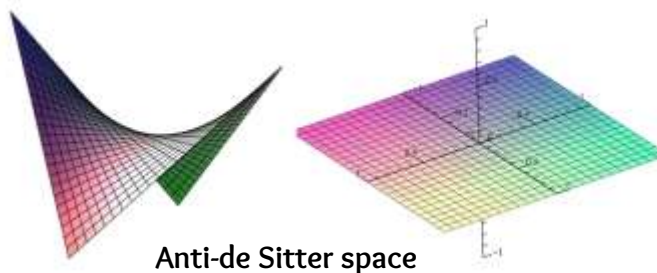
When I first heard of the Holographic Universe, I was not shocked. I thought, “YES, it is absolutely possible.” How did I know? I had no science or technology background to prove this but I knew in my gut and in my soul that it is so. I have spent the last five years studying and researching quantum physics and the idea that we live in a giant hologram. I have read over twenty books and watched over hundreds of hours of videos on these two subjects. Suffice to say, we have not been able to prove it, but all pointers lead to the possibility of a holographic universe. I will summarize all I have learned and you be the judge. Believe it or not. It is really up to you!

So, how does the science of quantum physics and holographic universe connect?

Werner Heisenberg, the German theoretical mathematician (known for the Uncertainty Principle), among others, interpreted the mathematics of QP to mean that reality doesn’t exist until observed. In addition, many theoretical physicists believe the we live in a giant holographic universe. Whaaat? You say!!!

Q: What did the quantum physicist say before the bar fight?

A: Let me atom!



In 1998, Juan Maldacena, Argentinian physicist, demonstrated that a hypothetical universe could be a hologram. His particular hypothetical universe was in what's called ¹⁵ (that, to simplify things, has a curved shape over huge distances, as opposed to our universe, that is believed to be flat).

“What's more, by viewing this universe in two dimensions, he found a way to make the increasingly popular idea of string theory — a

¹⁴ Discover magazine <https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/does-the-universe-exist-if-were-not-looking>

¹⁵ Wikipedia, Anti-de Sitter Space, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-de_Sitter_space

broad framework in which the basic building blocks of the universe are one-dimensional strings, rather than particles — jibe neatly with the well-established laws of particle physics.”

And, even more importantly, by doing so, he united two hugely important, disparate concepts in physics under one theoretical framework,” says Joseph Stromberg in an article on VOX.¹⁶

***“The holographic principle connected the theory of gravity
to theories of particle physics,”
Juan Maldacena, Argentinian physicist***

Combining these two fundamental ideas into a single coherent theory was a big deal because it makes the idea of a holographic universe possible. Matthew Headrick, Associate professor at Brandeis University explains:

“The problem of combining quantum mechanics and Einstein's theory of relativity is one of the hardest problems in physics. So, quantum mechanics is a theory that is usually used to describe things happening at very small scales, like atoms and nuclei, and so on. Einstein's theory of relativity is used to describe gravity and the universe on large scales.

As theoretical physicists, we're not satisfied to have two different theories. We need one, unified theory which encompasses both, and that's a very hard problem that theoretical physicists have been working on for the better part of the last hundred years. It turns out that this idea of the holographic principle or the universe is a hologram, although at first, it might seem like a completely random idea, it actually helps us to solve some of the thorniest puzzles that arise when you try to combine quantum mechanics and general relativity. That's why we're excited about and that's why we continue to study it.”¹⁷

This work is theoretical though and there is no actual scientific proof yet. Experimental physicists need to make testable prediction on the holographic theory, then gather evidence to see if it matches the prediction.

*There are 3 types of people in this world
Those who understand quantum computing
Those who do not understand quantum computing
And those who both simultaneously do and do not understand quantum computing!*



Regardless, the particle/wave or energy/mass duality, along with removal of object/subject separation, has caused a quantum leap in understanding our universe.

Einstein's famous $E=MC^2$, was previously understood to mean there are two fundamental entities, mass and energy. However, now, with discoveries in QP, scientists have realized that mass and energy (particle/wave) are not two physical entities. Lynn Taggart, author of ***The Field***

¹⁶ Stromberg, Joseph, “Some physicists believe we're living in a giant hologram — and it's not that far-fetched,” Jun 29, 2015, <https://www.vox.com/2015/6/29/8847863/holographic-principle-universe-theory-physics>

¹⁷ Brandeis Now, “The theory that the universe is a hologram explained in under 5 minutes”, <https://www.brandeis.edu/now/2018/november/thetake-podcast-hologram.html>

writes about the discoveries of two scientists, Hal Puthoff and Bernie Haisch:

“...matter is not a fundamental property of physics. The Einstein equation was simply a recipe for the amount of energy necessary to create the appearance of mass. It means that there aren't two fundamental physical entities – something material and another immaterial – but only one: energy. Everything in your world, anything you hold in your hand, no matter how dense, how heavy, how large, on its most fundamental level boils down to a collection of electric charges interacting with a background sea of electromagnetic and other energetic fields – a kind of electromagnetic drag force. As they would write later [in Haisch et al., 'Beyond $E=mc^2$ '], mass was not equivalent to energy; mass was energy. Or, even more fundamentally, there is no mass. There is only charge.”¹⁸ Lynn Taggart, *The Field*

Think about it: scientists have found the evidence that **EVERYTHING IS ENERGY!**

“The solar-system picture of electrons and protons as tiny, solid, planet-like structures whizzing around a larger interior neutron in an atom was dead wrong. Electrons, muons, tauons, quarks, and gluons have no internal structure and no physical size, meaning that they are entirely illusory or put another way, made up of energy.”¹⁹

World as a Holographic Simulation

Reality as a simulation or hologram is no longer a fringe theory. We refer to the virtual reality game experience as a matrix, grids, simulation and hologram. There are those trying to prove that simulation exists and others who are trying to break us out of it.

The idea of world as a holographic simulation, was popularized by the movie *The Matrix*, where humans are hooked to machines that enable them to live in a simulated world to keep humans engaged. *The Matrix*, was not just a sci-fi movie. It was a wakeup call for many of us. It challenged our understanding of reality, the illusion that persists and buffers us from the Divine Truth.



“What is the matrix? The matrix is a computer-generated dreamworld, the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.

What is real? How do you define real? If you're talking about what you can feel, what you can smell, what you can taste and see, then real is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain. This is the world that you know. The world as it was at the end of the twentieth century. It exists now only as part of a neural-interactive simulation that we call the Matrix. You've been living in a dream world, Neo. This is the world as it exists

¹⁸ Lynn Taggart, *The Field*, pg. 119

¹⁹ Khan, Aasif, “The Illusion of Reality: The Scientific Proof That Everything is Energy and Reality Isn't Real”
http://www.esalq.usp.br/lepse/imgs/conteudo_thumb/The-Illusion-of-Reality---The-Scientific-Proof-That-Everything-is-Energy-and-Reality-Isnt-Real.pdf

today.... Welcome to the Desert of the Real.” Morpheus, The Matrix

Similarly, the simulation hypothesis contends that reality is in fact a simulation (most likely a computer simulation), of which we are totally unaware.

“The simulation hypothesis proposes that all of existence might be a simulated reality, such as a computer simulation which convinces its inhabitants that the simulation is "real.”²⁰

This is not a new idea; the old mystics believed that the world is an illusion. I will cover this in the next chapter.

I was first introduced to holograms in Star Trek. I have always loved Star Trek (yes, I'm a Trekkie!) and watched Star Trek, The Original Series (ST-TOS) religiously in Iran when I was a child. The series took me beyond the confines and limitations of our world into places and situations that I had never heard of, as the famous motto says: “To boldly go where no one has gone before!” The series delivered hope and what is possible for humanity when we expand our horizons and our consciousness. It showed diverse beings working together in harmony and honoring, celebrating and valuing each other. It gave women leadership roles that were not available to a little girl in Iran. I was hooked!!!

Later, in the USA, I watched the re-runs over and over and I was thrilled when I heard that a new series called Star Trek, The Next Generation (ST-TNG) was being filmed. I have since then without exaggeration, watched every episode of ST-TNG 4 or 5 times.

The science in the World of Ten Thousand Things (depicted in Star Trek and quantum physics theories) may not be exactly as a Holographic Universe created by the Source of All That Is (SATI), but the idea is quite similar.



In the first episode of ST-TNG we're introduced to the holodeck, an immersive virtual reality or holographic environment simulator, designed and used by Starfleet. Holograms are projected light and electromagnetic energy that create the illusion of solid objects to create a realistic 3D simulation of a real or imaginary setting. Holographic programs are installed aboard starships and space stations for use in entertainment, training, and investigative purposes.

Wow! Think of the possibilities, you could travel all over the universe without leaving the comfort of your own ship! I was in heaven!! The idea of Holographic Universe did not seem strange to me, especially since I have been playing lots of action-role video games since my UC Berkeley days (in the 80s), I could absolutely imagine us living in a huge simulation.

²⁰ Simulation Hypothesis, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simulation_hypothesis

The Holographic Self

How can we live in a Holographic Universe? What we experience (feel, see, touch and sense) looks and feels very real and very solid. So how can it be a hologram?

"Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one."

Attributed to Albert Einstein



David Bohm, a pioneer quantum physicist, built on the theories, research and findings of Dr. Karl Pribram, neurosurgeon and a neurophysiologist:

“...the brain is able to translate the avalanche of frequencies it receives via the senses (light frequencies, sound frequencies, etc.) into the concrete world of our perceptions. Encoding and decoding frequencies is precisely what a hologram does best. Just as a hologram functions as a sort of lens, a translating device able to convert an apparently meaningless blur of frequencies into a coherent image, Pribram believes the brain also comprises a lens and uses holographic principles to mathematically convert the frequencies it receives through the senses into the inner world of our perceptions.

Basically, Pribram believes “our brains mathematically construct ‘hard’ reality by relying on input from a frequency domain.

Pribram believes memories are encoded not in neurons, or small groupings of neurons, but in patterns of nerve impulses that crisscross the entire brain in the same way that patterns of laser light interference crisscross the entire area of a piece of film containing a holographic image. In other words, Pribram believes that the brain is itself a hologram.”²¹

Well, damn, we are a hologram too!!!



What the heck does this mean?



Imagine you are playing the Star Wars video game on a console or TV. All connections are wireless. In this level of the game, Yoda, Anakin and Ob Wan have to fight the Dark Side. You select Anakin as your character/avatar in the game. With your game console, you move him around. The other characters are either played by your friends, or the video game itself. After a while you get tired and get up to get something to eat. Who are you? Are you Anakin?

Of course not!!!

What about Anakin? Let's look from his perspective. Let's say he's hit by the lightsaber. Is he hurt? Well, yes, the game deducts life energy from the character.

²¹ Talbot, Michael. An essay also entitled The Holographic Universe

Are you hurt? Of course not!! It is not real. Well, this is exactly the model of the world. Your body is the character in the game. Your consciousness (your True Self) connected to SATI (Source of All That Is) is the one moving you around. You think you **are** the character in the game, but you are not! The character receives thoughts (as in commands in the game) and the character thinks, it is generating the thoughts.

Again, you are **not** the character; you are **not** the body given to the character; the thoughts are **not** you.

Then you ask: Who AM I?

And the answer becomes evident after a while. You are the Awareness/Consciousness in which the body and the entire universe arises.

“But I feel the pain in the body,” you say! Yes! I do too, especially now that I’m older! Researchers have found that athletes regularly play even when injured. How is that possible? Studies suggest that people can change their pain tolerance by modifying their perception of pain. For example, athletes learn to “embrace the pain” to push themselves to perform at a higher level.

Dr. David Hawkins says:

“Suffering is due to resistance. This applies to physical pain as well. For instance, by intensely focusing on the pain and being persistent and not resisting it, pain actually disappears. Pain and suffering are two distinctly different things. The mind assumes that they are inseparable, which they are not. It is possible to experience pain but not suffer from it. Suffering is due to resisting the pain. If one is willing to surrender to it, accept it, and completely stop resisting it continuously, the suffering, and even frequently the pain itself, will cease.”²²

He has said that it was possible for him to go through major surgery on two different occasions without anesthesia.

In any case, I have on occasion (especially at the dentist) used the “It’s NOT Real” Mantra over and over and the next thing I know, the work is done, and it is over. I am absolutely not at the level of achieving such thing as Dr. Hawkins, but I keep at it 😊.



In summary, for me, the realization that Niloo is also a hologram, a computer-generated character in a video game living in a Holographic Universe, altered my entire existence. The illusion of the World of Ten Thousand Things began to distort and waiver. It took a while but one by one, I pulled the threads of the tapestry of the illusion, until the “reality” that was so persistent began to fall apart. I will give you practices in chapter 7 that will help you dismantle the illusion.

²² David Hawkins, “The Eye of the I: From Which Nothing is Hidden” (2002), Chapter 19: Commentaries and Examples, pp. 281–282

Arguments Against

There are physicists that argue against a Holographic Universe. But I have found their arguments unconvincing. Physicist Sabine Hossenfelder argues:

"The idea that space may be digital is a fringe idea of a fringe idea of a speculative subfield of a subfield. I'm not saying it's not interesting. I'm just saying if you'd actually go and ask a representative sample of physicists, I guess you'd find that most don't care about the holographic principle and wouldn't agree on any statement about it."²³

"First, an optical hologram is not actually captured in two dimensions; the holographic film has a thickness, and you need that thickness to store the information. The holographic principle, on the other hand, is a mathematical abstraction, and the encoding really occurs in one dimension less.

Second, as we saw earlier, in a real hologram, each part contains information about the whole object. But in the mathematics of the holographic universe, this is not the case. If you take only a piece of the boundary, that will not allow you to reproduce what goes on in the entire universe."²⁴

Simply stated, she argues that the power required to generate such a simulation is too great. But this is definitely not a valid argument for me, gamers and gaming programmers. If you have ever played action-role playing video games, you will know that there are quests and each quest takes the character/avatar into different locations. Well, once you leave the previous location, it is no longer rendered. That location vanishes. This is called a holographic rendering that enables the application to draw a hologram at a precise location in the world around the character. This reduces the load of the hologram emitters.



In this picture, for example, Chewbacca has entered Millennium Falcon's interior. You only see what is in front of Chewbacca and not behind it. Only the frontal view is rendered. If you turn Chewbacca around, you will only see the opposite view and not this view.

Therefore, only the "current view" is ever rendered.

In addition, scientists have written codes (quantum error correction) that mitigate the decoherence of particles in a small holographic universe model created for experiments.

Quantum coherence is the idea that all objects have wave-like properties. If an object's wave-like nature is split in two, then the two waves may *coherently* interfere with each. This is very similar to the concept of Entanglement.

Quantum decoherence is the loss of quantum coherence. Quantum decoherence happens when there is no longer a definite phase relation between the two different states.

²³ Sabine Hossenfelder, The Hoganmeter, <http://backreaction.blogspot.com/2012/02/hoganmeter.html>

²⁴ <http://backreaction.blogspot.com/2021/03/is-universe-really-hologram.html>

“Coherence lies at the heart of quantum computing, in which a qubit is in a superposition of the “0” and “1” states, resulting in a speed-up over various classical algorithms. When such a state experiences decoherence, however, all of its quantumness is typically lost and the advantage vanishes.”²⁵

Qubits are quantum particles that have the probability of being in each of two states, wave [0] and particle [1]). But they are terribly error-prone and “flip-out” to use a non-scientific term! The feeblest magnetic field or stray microwave pulse causes them to undergo “bit-flips” that switch their chances of being [0] and [1]. This is called decoherence.

So how the hell can we have a holographic universe if decoherence is so easy? Scientists have found schemes (codes) that protect the information even when individual qubits get corrupted. And voila! Problem solved!!!

The codes needed to thwart errors in quantum computers may also give the fabric of space-time its intrinsic robustness. If we can do it, the Source of All That Is (SATI) can probably do it better!

In any case, there are arguments for and against the idea that we live in a “giant simulation,” but it seems perfectly possible to me. The possibility becomes so real, that I can’t, at times, help but say: “Computer, end simulation!” (A statement used in Star Trek to end the holographic program).

Yes, I am a Trekkie and sci-fi nerd but I have also been a spiritual seeker for a long time, perhaps because I’m a sci-fi nerd. What do the old sages and their wisdoms say about our world?

*Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream 😊*

Whether we live in a holographic universe or in a dream as advised by sages, has implications on our life experience and that’s what we’ll cover in the next chapter.

Pause, Investigate and Contemplate

1. Investigate the world. Is the holographic universe plausible? Can you and the people in the world just be characters in a game called Life?
2. Watch the movie: Vanilla Sky with Tom Cruise, Thirteenth Floor or the West World.
3. What does being a hologram or a holo-character mean to you? What thoughts come up? What feelings? Notice the chatter of Ego and the stories that arise!

²⁵ Lisa Zyga, “Physicists find quantum coherence and quantum entanglement are two sides of the same coin”, <https://phys.org/news/2015-06-physicists-quantum-coherence-entanglement-sides.html>

Chapter 3: When Harry Met Sally

“There is no ‘out there,’ out there.”

John Wheeler, American theoretical physicist

Invented the theory of nuclear fission and coined the name black hole

When Harry (science) met Sally (spirituality), it was not love at first sight! It’s been over a hundred years since their meeting (birth of quantum physics) and yet most scientists are hesitant to admit the connection between quantum physics and spirituality. They continue to dismiss the research and tiptoe around the findings and science that points to reality as an illusion. Several brave scientists (most of them I have mentioned) have pointed to the connection but it has not become mainstream. Will Harry and Sally ever entangle and marry? Probably not! Harry has a problem with committing to Sally! 😊

On the other hand, many eastern mystics and sages as well as renowned western authors, physicists and poets have unanimously claimed that the universe is inside us and that “there’s no out there”, out there.

“There is nothing outside you. That is what you must ultimately learn...”

ACIM, (T-18.VI.1)

Understanding that the outside world is really inside us and the inside world is really outside us will change everything.

World of Illusion

So, what do the religions of the world or spiritual paths tell us about the world? Let’s find out!

Bahai Faith

In the Bahai faith, not only is the material world a literal mirage, it never remains the same. Unlike something real, that by definition means it endures, the material world is highly impermanent. Nothing lasts here, in this world we mistakenly call the real world. Clearly, the Bahais believe that the world is an illusion. According to Baha’u’llah, prophet and founder of the Baha’i Faith,

“Verily I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it with all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion.”²⁶

Buddhism:

In general, in Buddhism, the world as we see it is an illusion, that conceals the true reality beyond. Buddha simply said: “All is an illusion,” and did not expand on it! Unfortunately,

“The precise nature of this 'illusion' that is the phenomenal universe is debated among

²⁶ Baha’u’llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah, p. 328-329

different schools.”²⁷

One school posits that:

“...the perceived reality is considered illusory not in the sense that reality is a fantasy or unreal, but that our perceptions and preconditions mislead us to believe that we are separate from the elements that we are made of.”²⁸

Others:

“...consider perceived reality literally unreal.”²⁹

As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu puts it:

"In a real sense, all the visions that we see in our lifetime are like a big dream."³⁰

In Buddhism reality is seen, ultimately, as a form of personal 'projection' or perceptual experience, resulting from the karma. Whether it is a projection or a dream, the conclusion is that ***it is not real.***

Hinduism:

The ancient Hindu philosophers believed in a fundamental truth that the world of our sense - experience is all illusion (Maya), that changes. Plurality and causation are not real, but there is only one reality, The Source of All That is (SATI).

Ramana Maharshi, the renowned Hindu sage explains:

“At the level of the spiritual seeker you have got to say that the world is an illusion. There is no other way. When a man forgets that he is Brahman, who is real, permanent and omnipresent, and deludes himself into thinking that he is a body in the universe which is filled with bodies that are transitory, and labours under that delusion, you have got to remind him that the world is unreal and a delusion.”³¹

In Advaita Vedanta, (traced back to the first millennium B.C.E), the Indian spiritual philosophy Maya, is explained as follows:

“Maya is "the powerful force that creates the cosmic illusion that the phenomenal world is real. In this nondualist school, Maya is the source of ignorance which causes the finite, empirical ego to be mistaken for the infinite Self (Ātman).”³²

Bansi Pandit explains further:

“Under the influence of maya, the atman forgets its divine nature, identifies itself with the body and mind, assumes individuality and thus enjoys pleasures and suffers pain in the world.

²⁷ Wikipedia, “Reality in Buddhism”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality_in_Buddhism

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, “Dream Yoga and The Practice Of Natural Light.”

³¹ Advaita Atma Yoga post, Talks with Ramana Maharshi, “The World is Real or Illusory?” <http://elmsattva-nonduality.blogspot.com/2018/05/the-world-is-real-or-illusory-ramana.html>

³² Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_\(religion\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_(religion))

Maya has two powers: the power of veiling the Ultimate Reality, and the power of falsely projecting the Ultimate Reality as something else. These dual powers of maya create a mirage-like effect, similar to falsely identifying a rope as a snake in dull light or mistaking sand for water in a desert. ***Under the influence of maya, the atman does not change, but forgets its divine nature and becomes a part of the phenomenal world, that is also projected by maya.*** [Emphasis added].”³³

Therefore, Maya is the cosmic illusion that deludes us into forgetting our own divine nature. This forgetfulness causes us to mistakenly identify ourselves with the body and mind, assuming individuality, thus causing separateness.

David Frawley, explains this illusion so well in an article online:

“This experience of illusion begins at the level of our daily lives. If we go to the store to buy groceries, for example, we commonly note that the actual nutritional value of a food item is usually different than the appearance or even size of the package. In our social interactions, for another example, we often discover once we get to know a person that we find them to be quite different than how they first appeared. We frequently get such ‘reality checks’ in life when we find out that things are not what we thought they were, and we were instead being misled by appearances or by our own expectations. All of this is Maya.

The seeming or illusory nature of the phenomena, events or circumstances in the world is a common fact of our daily lives. Those individuals who are wise do not allow themselves to be taken in by appearances, promises, or marketing. They hold back, wait and observe before making any important judgments or decisions, looking to what may be behind the actions and motivations of others or the circumstances involved.

In the modern world, we live in a turbulent ocean of appearances, impressions and influences. Unless we learn to probe beyond these surface waves, we will unlikely find the truth of life and will often be deceived, not only by others but also by ourselves, as each one of us has his or her illusions about self and world as well.”³⁴

With the advent of social media, ownership of legacy media in the hands of the elite, and fake news, our view of the world is even more warped.

“We see only things we agree with, that we like or that we could buy and, as a result, we find ourselves in the so-called reality tunnel — a concept borrowed from medicine. The reality tunnel is that narrow spectrum of information we see, being inside the personified virtual reality. As a result, we stop perceiving the complexity of the world; our vision becomes reduced to this reality formed by the web.”³⁵

In the digital age, the illusion of freedom and democracy is fed to us. The information we

³³ Bansri Pandit, *The Hindu Mind: Fundamentals of Hindu Religion and Philosophy for All Ages*, p119.

³⁴ Frawley, David, “The Meaning of Maya: The Illusion of the World”,
<https://dharmabindu.com/?l=pt&p=ensinamento&id=438>

³⁵ Documentary Channel article, “Reality tunnel: How social media controls our lives and forces us further apart”,
<https://rtd.rt.com/stories/reality-tunnel-how-social-media-controls-users/>

consume, and the choices we make are mostly determined by algorithms and platforms controlled by unaccountable corporate or government elites. We actually live in an illusion within the illusion!

In Summary, one of the Indian Vedanta scriptures, Isha Upishanad, says:

“Maya, the veil which covers the truth is golden, so rich, gaudy and dazzling that it takes away the mind of the observer from the inner contents.”³⁶

Quite so, isn't it? We are so deeply caught up in the drama of the world (pandemic, wars, unemployment, hunger, etc.), that we mostly forget to tend to our Soul.

Islam

The Quran, in several Surah's, states that the nature of reality is a delusion and the real reality is the life hereafter.³⁷

“And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.” [3:185]

“And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion.” [6:32]

"Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, a show and boasting among yourselves, a quest for greater riches and more children. Its similitude is that of vegetation that flourish after rain: the growth of which delights the tillers, then it withers and you see it turn yellow, soon it becomes dry and crumbles away. In the hereafter there will be either severe punishment or forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure. The life of this world is nothing but an illusion." [57:20]

Read more: <http://www.city-data.com/forum/islam/2437378-islam-life-world-illusion.html> [57:20]

“And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter - that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew.” [29:64]

Judaism

In Judaic tradition, reality is also seen as illusion:

“The world in which we live is referred to by the Zohar (the classic text of the Kabbalah, the mystical book of the Torah) as *alma d'shikra*, “the world of illusion”—or, to be less magnanimous, “the world of lies.” Moreover, the Torah (of which the Zohar is a component) insists that the world is objectively real in some absolute sense.”³⁸

In essence, they believe the error is in the confusion of observation with reality.

³⁶ Sethumadhavan, T.N., “Appearance and Reality- Concept of Maya”

<https://www.esamskriti.com/e/Spirituality/Vedanta/Appearance-and-Reality--Concept-of-Maya-2.aspx>

³⁷ <https://legacy.quran.com/57/20>

³⁸ Yaakov Brawer, “Reality and Its Shadow”, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2531/jewish/Reality-and-Its-Shadow.htm

Shamanism

I am least knowledgeable in Shamanism and have found few sources that can be used on Shamanic beliefs of reality. But here's what I have found:

Chuck Coburn, author and spiritual physic, writes in his book, *Reality is Just an Illusion*,

“Shamans believe it is not the act of observation but how one observes that dictates reality. They claim that we each see the reality we intent to see...and it is an illusion.”³⁹

David Paladin, an influential Navajo artist, states:

“In a shamanic vision, you begin in the middle world—this reality. You become aware that your separation from other things is an illusion. You begin to see the barriers that exist between you and others as self-created and limiting structures of your own mind.”⁴⁰

Shamanic rituals and ceremonies, seeped into American culture by Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (1954) where he chronicles effect of mescaline, a psychedelic alkaloid found in various cacti. Then in 1957, María Sabina, a shaman from Oaxaca, who used psychedelic mushrooms in her healing sessions gained notoriety because of a *Life* magazine article where the author, Gordon Wasson covered his experience in the mushroom ceremony with Sabina.

These rituals were finally popularized in the 1960s by Carlos Castañeda's work.

“He sold millions of books in over a dozen languages about his encounters with Don Juan, a Mexican Yaqui shaman, who tried to break Castañeda's attachment to the western principle of reality in order to reveal the illusory nature of the material world.”⁴¹

Herbal psychedelics such as Ayahuasca and magic mushrooms are used with the supervision of a shaman (hopefully) to help us see past the illusion of separation and remember that we are really One.

Sufism

In the same vein and Indian philosophy of Advaita, Sufism and *Persian* spirituality, over 1000 years old, clearly state that the world is an illusion:

***“The world is an illusion, and we are like merchants,
trying to buy its moonlight, measured by the yard.”***

Rumi, Masnavi, Book U, v 1039

Sufis, i.e., Muslim mystics, believe that the whole world is an illusion, and only God is real and the only existence. imply the process of transcending everything because everything is illusory.

“In the Sufism tradition, ‘the default condition of mankind is immersion in the illusion of this

³⁹ Coburn, Chuck, “Reality is Just an Illusion: The World of Shamans, Ghosts, and Spirit Guides,” 1999

⁴⁰ Fox, Matthew, “David Paladin on the Three Worlds of the Shaman”,

<https://dailymeditationswithmatthewfox.org/2021/05/15/david-paladin-on-the-three-worlds-of-the-shaman/>

⁴¹ Reimer, Alisa, “Altered States: The Power of Shamanic Rituals” <https://www.scorpionsmykonos.com/enc-shamanism>

world. For the uninitiated, that illusion is reality—the material world of the senses is all that exists. However, as we progress along the path of spiritual development, our understanding of reality changes. We learn that this world is completely unreal. We come to understand that there is another reality—an authentic reality—behind this realm of illusion, a reality from which we are veiled, but which, nonetheless, is the only reality that really matters to us.”⁴²

As you journey within yourself, you realize you are the veil that separates you from others. As you progress you will begin to experience the illusion will fall away.

*“Into the mirror of my cup the reflection of your glorious face fell
And from the gentle laughter of love, into a drunken state of longing I fell
Struck with wonder by the beauty of the picture that within the cup I beheld
The picture of this world of illusion from the reflection of my mind fell.”
Hafez*

Taoism and Chinese Philosophy:

One of the most important allegories of Taoism is the ‘Dream of the Butterfly’ of Zhuangzi, an influential Chinese philosopher who lived around the 4th century BC.

“Once upon a time, I, Zhuangzi, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my fancies as a butterfly, and was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly, I awaked, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man. Between a man and butterfly there is necessarily a barrier.”⁴³

The barrier is the veil pointed out in Persian mysticism. Looking at the whole body of the Zhuangzi, we see that he emphasizes again and again the fictitiousness of such a stable, independent and separate from the world ‘I’.

“We go around telling each other, I do this, I do that – but how do we know that this ‘I’ we talk about has any ‘I’ to it? You dream you’re a bird and soar up into the sky; you dream you’re a fish and dive down in the pool. But now when you tell me about it, I don’t know whether you are awake or whether you are dreaming.”⁴⁴

In summary, Zhuangzi believed that man has no ‘Self,’ and he is like a perfect mirror, reflecting everything. This idea is very much like the Buddhist “projection” belief, covered above.

Western Philosophies

One of the most influential philosophers of all time, Plato invites us to an imaginary cave⁴⁵, where people have been chained and are observing a blank wall. There is a fire that creates

⁴² Sufi Meditation Defined: A Path To Divine Healing <https://www.sufimeditationcenter.com/what-is-sufi-meditation/>

⁴³ Giles 1926: 47; Moeller 2006: 44

⁴⁴ Watson, Burton, “Zhuangzi: Basic Writings (Translations from the Asian Classics)”, 1968: 90

⁴⁵ Plato, “Allegory of the Cave”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory_of_the_cave#Summary

shadows of the themselves and whatever is happening behind them on the wall. Their voices echo in the cave while the shadows dance on the wall thus making the shadows appear real and even talking. Plato points out that we are like the people in the cave in that we “think” we see reality by watching the shadows on the wall. Whereas, beyond our perceived reality, there lies a world of “perfect” forms. Everything that we see is just a shade, an imitation of how things truly are.

So, an awakened person is like a prisoner who is freed from the cave and comes to understand that the shadows on the wall are actually not reality at all.

René Descartes, the famous French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist (dubbed the father of modern western philosophy), argues that if we cannot even tell for sure whether we are dreaming, then how can we know for certain any truth about the world in which we seem to live?

“His philosophy was built on **the idea of radical doubt, in which nothing that is perceived or sensed is necessarily true.** [Emphasis added]. The only thing that remains true that there is a mind or consciousness doing the doubting and believing its perceptions, hence the famous formulation, ‘I think therefore I am.’”⁴⁶

There are several more philosophers who spoke of reality as an illusion. But I will leave you with a final quote

“There is no reality except the one contained within us.

That is why so many people live such an unreal life. They take the images outside of them for reality and never allow the world within to assert itself.”

Renowned German-Swiss author, Hermann Hesse in Steppenwolf

Through the World of Illusion

Almost all spiritual paths tell us that the world is an illusion or dream.

So far, based on the wisdom of sages and religions from all over the world, we’ve established that the world is an illusion, a dream/cave/matrix (take your pick!).

The question is: can we break free?

When I first learned of these teaching, I remembered an episode of ST-TNG, called Ship in a Bottle where Professor James Moriarty was a fictional character in a Sherlock Holmes holodeck program. He was created as an adversary capable of outwitting Data. Moriarty became aware of his own consciousness, seized control of the Enterprise in his quest to be freed to live in reality, outside the confines of a holographic environment.

But alas, that was not possible since only the emitters in the holodeck could generate the character. Later in Star Trek Voyager (ST-VOY), a mobile emitter was developed to allow the Holographic doctor to roam the ship.

⁴⁶ New Learning Online, “Descartes: ‘I Think Therefore I Am’”, <https://newlearningonline.com/new-learning/chapter-7/descartes-i-think-therefore-i-am>

So, you are awakened to the realization that we live in a dream world/matrix/cave, the first think you say is, “I want out!” At least, I did! I was done with the drama of the world and samsara (beginningless cycle of repeated birth, mundane existence and dying again).

Next was the question, “how do I get out?”

Well, you can’t! Unfortunately, unlike the movie, Matrix we can’t take the red pill!

“You take the blue pill—the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill—you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.” Morpheus in The Matrix

There is no getting out of the dream world **permanently**, in this body and with this character (e.g., my character is Niloo Soleimani, I was born in Iran, etc., etc.)!

“WhAAAAAt? I can’t?” I said.

“No!”

I had thought I could forever escape this world of illusion. So, I was depressed for a whole week and hid away in my bed under the covers. I finally got up and started to do research feverishly!

So, the bad news is there is no such thing as permanently “getting out of the illusion”, because the one who thinks he wants to get out of the illusion is the one creating the illusion, is an illusion himself. He will never get out of himself. However, the good news is, you can cross over to beyond the veil and experience Oneness.

***“I have lived on the lip of insanity, wanting to know reasons, knocking on a door.
It opens. I’ve been knocking from the inside.”***

Rumi

Rumi and many Persian mystics point to the threshold between the two world and a “door” that allows you to cross over, and see and experience an astonishing realm beyond the World of Ten Thousand Things.

***“Out beyond ideas of right and wrong, (meaning beyond judgements)
there is a field. I’ll meet you there.***

When the soul lies down in that grass,

the world is too full to talk about.

***Ideas, language, even the phrase “each other”
doesn’t make any sense.***

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.

Don’t go back to sleep. (Meaning don’t become unconscious)

You must ask for what you really want.

Don’t go back to sleep.

***People are going back and forth across the doorsill
where the two worlds touch.***

The door is round and open.

Don't go back to sleep."

Rumi

Advanced sages like Rumi can cross over at will or live in both worlds at the same time.

Beyond the World of Illusion

Beyond the illusion is self-realization, a state of Oneness. According to Dr. Deepak Chopra, the renowned author and spiritual teacher:

“Oneness is the coming together of all opposites. It’s always with us as the basis and underlying essence of everything. It’s nothing in itself, but holds the potential for everything. We have to go beyond the senses, beyond duality to find Oneness.”⁴⁷

Nisargadatta Maharaj describes the experience:

The ever-awaited first moment was the moment when I was convinced that I was not an individual at all. The idea of my individuality had set me burning so far. The scalding pain was beyond my capacity to endure; but there is not even a trace of it now, I am no more an individual. There is nothing to limit my being now. The ever-present anxiety and the gloom have vanished and now I am all beatitude, pure knowledge, pure consciousness.”⁴⁸

It sounds wonderful, right? Yes! But there is more! There are two non-duality teachings. The traditional Buddhist, Zen Buddhists and neo-Advaita teachers emphasize the “Void.” I will go into more detail about the types of teaching in the next chapter.

According to Britannica,

“Emptiness, also called Nothingness, or Void, is a state of ‘pure consciousness’ in which the mind has been emptied of all particular objects and images; also, the undifferentiated reality (a world without distinctions and multiplicity) or quality of reality that the emptied mind reflects or manifests.”⁴⁹

The goal of a spiritual seeker (according to Buddhism, Zen Buddhism and neo-Advaita teachings) is then to reach a state of nothingness that is above the duality of the world of illusion, through meditation, negation of the world of illusion and other practices. If you listen to various teachers, you will hear them speak of void as the ultimate state.

However, according to Rumi and other Persian mystics, there is an additional state above the Void and that is experiencing the Divine Love.

Dr. David R. Hawkins describes it as follows:

“Void is quite impressive but is not the ultimate reality. It is infinite, it is eternal and extremely profound, except that as an adolescence I experienced the presence of God as profound love.

⁴⁷ Deepak Chopra, “What is Oneness”, <https://chopra.com/articles/what-is-oneness>

⁴⁸ Nisargadatta Maharaj, “Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization”, <https://realization.org/p/nisargadatta/dunn.self-knowledge-and-self-realization.html>

⁴⁹ Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/emptiness>

The ultimate reality is profound Love.”⁵⁰

Rumi has written over 40,000 verses of poetry in Divané Shams and 25,000 in Masnavi about this experience, – combining stories, fables and spiritual teachings, guiding us along the Way of Love. His verses tell the stories of the soul’s love affair with God, whom he calls the Beloved, the love affair that leads from the pain and anguish of longing until we are reunited with our divine nature. This is the great mystical journey that draws us from ourself back to our Beloved, until we are reunited.

Many mistakenly compare Divine Love to earthly love. But it is sooooo much more! It is exaltation, rapture, intoxication, ecstasy and pure joy.

***“I drained this cup; there is nothing, now, but ecstatic intoxication
Were I ever other than this, I regret being born
If forever it is this, I’ll trample both worlds and dance ecstatic forever!
O Shams I am so drunk! what can I say, but I am so drunk on love.”***⁵¹

Rumi

Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee describes this state beautifully:

“Through this painful intimacy of love our heart is changed. No longer caught in ourself we are open to the Beloved. Ruined in the tavern of love we can taste the intoxicating wine of His presence. This is when the bliss begins. At the beginning it may come as a gentle lover’s foreplay, like butterfly wings at the edge of the heart, but in this gentle touch the whole of oneself is saturated with love, a love that runs through the body and soul, in which nothing is excluded. Then one is really reborn, reborn in love, in the deep knowing of one’s true nature and the love that is present in oneself and in everything.”⁵²

This state is quite different than the Void, isn’t it? And much, much more enjoyable, as I can attest! It may seem scary from the description and poetry, but only to the Ego; it knows it has to die if you follow this path and it is scared. But Rumi, himself advises us:

***“Hold on to the reins of Love and don’t be afraid.
Hold on to the real behind the false and don’t be afraid.”***

I am only a student on this path and not an expert, by any means. I cannot lead you to that World Beyond the Illusion, but I can tell you how to thrive in this world, living the Path of Love.

“Love calls – everywhere and always. We’re sky bound. Are you coming?”

Rumi

⁵⁰ David R. Hawkins, “On Buddhism, the Void and Transcending the Duality of Existence vs. Non-existence.”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUhlHkB1Vmo>

⁵¹ Daniel Liebert, “Rumi: Fragments, Ecstasies”, pp. 62-63.

⁵² Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, “Divine Intoxication & Rumi”, 2006, <https://goldensufi.org/divine-intoxication-rumi/>

Pause, Investigate and Contemplate

1. Can you accept that the world is an illusion?
2. What implications does this revelation that “the world is an illusion” have on your life?
3. Think of a night dream. Notice how everything within the dream seemed real to you, the character in the dream; They feel real while we’re in them. It’s only when we wake up then we realize that we were in a dream. Let’s say you dream of Las Vegas! Thousands of people in hundreds of casinos playing. Where does this imagined dream occur?

Upon investigation, you realize Las Vegas in the dream does not exist in reality. It doesn’t occur/arise in actual objective space. It only looks like the dream character in the dream is experiencing Las Vegas through the senses (eyes, ears, etc.) But they do not have real senses, do they?

“Strange sensory experiences are one cardinal characteristic of dreams. The sensation of falling, an inability to move quickly, and being unable to control body movements are just a few of the commonly reported sensory experiences that occur during dreams.”⁵³

Are you really falling or moving/not moving in the dream? Not really! And that is just like us in the World of Ten Thousand Things.

Because of years of conditioning, and reinforcement, Roger Castillo explains:

“Your whole life, is a feedback loop of what life is, has been put in place where the experience is of a person is the perceiver of everything perceived and what is perceived is through the instrument of the senses. This creates a subject, out of an object.”⁵⁴

This of course, this causes separation, duality, keeping us imprisoned in the world of illusion.

Roger continues:

“What we truly are is not an object. But the essence of life is formless and non-objective. It is pure subjectivity.”⁵⁵

When you investigate your dreams, you realize the illusion of time and space, body, senses are all created as part of the dream experience. You notice that perception (visuals, sounds and other senses) is a spontaneous arising.

Now that you have investigated dreams, consider that daily life is actually a dream in the mind of SATI (the Source of All That Is) and that we are the characters in the dream. You are not this body/mind. What you are is Awareness in which the body and everything arises.

⁵³ Kendra Cherry, “5 Major Characteristics of Dreams”, <https://www.verywellmind.com/characteristics-of-dreams-2795936>

⁵⁴ Roger Castillo – “Dreams, and other models”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPX8X2ZfcBE>

⁵⁵ *ibid*

Chapter 4: You and Me

***“The mysteries of universe are known neither to you nor me
the enigma can be understood neither by you nor me
From behind a veil, we converse
when the veil falls there remain neither you nor me.”***

Omar Khayyam,

Persian mathematician, astronomer, historian, philosopher, and poet

So far, we’ve talked about:

1. Our World – the World of Ten Thousand Things
 - a. Duality and polarity are the rules here.
 - b. Positionality and causality create division.
2. Quantum physics confirms there’s no out there, out there
 - a. We live in a holographic universe.
 - b. We ourselves are holograms.
3. Spirituality has long declared the world is an illusion/dream

Now we’ll get into a critical teaching/wisdom of Chinese, Indian and Persian spirituality: nonduality.

Non-Duality

In Chapter one, I introduced the symbol of Yin and Yang, depicting duality. If you rise above the duality, you will see a circle that is whole and complete, representing **Oneness**.

Nonduality is a philosophy, which says that there is just One Eternal Spirit in existence, and that everything in the Universe is an inseparable part of it.

The Eternal Spirit, or the Source of All There Is (SATI) is living through us. SATI speaking through Rumi says:

***“Pure souls, didn’t I tell you not to be seduced by this colorful world for
I am the Ultimate Painter.”***

Rumi

He further explains:

***We’re like the harp, and you’re striking it.
We do not make the cry – you make us cry.
We’re like the reed, the sound in us is Yours,
our echoes are from You – we are like mountains.
We are like chessmen caught in check/mate:
our check/mate are Yours, whose moves are wonderful.
Who are we, You Who are our soul of souls,***

***that we exist at all, in Your presence?
We and our beings are non-entities,
You, the Eternal Spirit, who show us death.
Rumi, Masnavi Book I, v602-607***

The oldest non-duality teaching is Advaita, literally meaning not-two. Buddhism, Sufism and Christianity also discuss a state of mind that is beyond our ordinary dualistic view of existence.

According to spiritual teacher and author, Rupert Spira:

“Non-duality is the recognition that underlying the multiplicity and diversity of experience there is a single, infinite and indivisible reality, whose nature is pure consciousness, from which all objects and selves derive their apparently independent existence.”

***My place is the Placeless, my trace is the Traceless;
'Tis neither body nor soul, for I belong to the soul of the Beloved.
I have put duality away; I have seen that the two worlds are one;
One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.”***

Rumi

At the same time, nonduality also states that the world is not real. From the nondual view, the world is an illusion created by the mind and the senses.

***“The person who thinks he is listening is illusory and yet nobody believes that he does not exist.
When you come here, I welcome you and extend to you my humble hospitality,
but in doing so I am fully aware of the exact position that
there is neither a speaker nor a listener.”***

Nisargadatta Maharaj

The mind finds it difficult to accept the concept of nonduality, because it does not accept that the world is a creation of the mind and the five senses, and that it is not real. The concept of Oneness is difficult to understand and experience in a world defined by two-ness! I will recommend practices that helped me rise above the World of Ten Thousand Things and its duality.

But there are many different practices and there are many spiritual teachers nowadays teaching non-duality. I have found two divergent paths:

1. Modern Non-Duality Teachings (that do not talk about Love) – Tony Parsons, Bob Adamson, Roger Castillo, Ramesh Balsekar
2. Devotional non-duality: Teachings that make Love center of their practice – Rumi, Hafez, Ramana Maharshi, David Hawkins

This is by no means a complete list of non-duality teachers, but examples of types of teaching.

Modern Non-Duality

Modern non-duality teachings or Neo-Advaita are taught mostly by western teachers but some Indian teachers as well. I found some of these teaching simple, to the point and easy to understand (e.g., Roger Castillo) and others didn't work well for me (e.g., Tony Parsons). But this is absolutely a personal preference (see What's the Right Path section below).

These teachers use the internet and video conferencing technology to hold satsangs (spiritual discourse or sacred gatherings) that makes their teaching widely available to people (and that is great!).

They rarely talk about love and when they do, it's about love in the world and not Divine Love (I will explain that later). In his video Roger Castillo on Love, explains love as a form of pleasure and defines love as: "the absence of hate."⁵⁶

Coming from the tradition of Love (as taught by Persian Mystics), I had a hard time accepting that love is simply the absence of hate! So, I continued my research by reading scriptures and sacred texts.

Some neo-Advaita teachers, such as Tony Parsons, even shun reading the scriptures. He states traditional advaita teachings as: "one of the many systems of personal indoctrination promising the eventual spiritual fulfilment":

“...so-called Traditional Advaita, for instance, is just another established religion with a proliferation of teachings and literature, all of which very successfully and consistently miss the mark,”⁵⁷

Devotional Non-Duality

The teachings of Devotional Nonduality, a term coined by Dr. David Hawkins,

“...emphasize the core truths of the world's great spiritual traditions: kindness and compassion to everything and everyone humility, forgiveness, reverence for all of life, and surrender to God. It is a direct path to Enlightenment in which each internal progression of love and integrity uplifts the whole of existence: "We change the world not by what we say or do but as a consequence of what we have become."⁵⁸

But Devotional non-duality is much more than this in the Indian and Persian traditions. Sages like Rumi and Hafez believe SATI or Supreme Consciousness is Love and seek to remove the veil of separation and become one with the Divine.

I call this the **Path of Love**, where Love is a choice we make, at every moment and every event/happening/circumstance in the world.

⁵⁶ Castillo, Roger, "Roger Castillo on Love," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScFDs3S60Uc>

⁵⁷ Parsons, Tony, "The Divine Misconception: Traditional Advaita (Oneness) versus Neo-Advaita" http://www.advaita.org.uk/discourses/trad_neo/neo_parsons.htm

⁵⁸ Hawkins, David R. https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00EY818TG/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

***“I looked for God. I went to a temple and I didn’t find him there.
Then I went to a church and I didn’t find him there. Then
I went to a mosque and I didn’t find him there.
Then finally I looked in my heart and there he was.”***

Rumi

Choosing the Path of Love calls for having an ‘open heart’, which involves an element of faith or trust that WHATEVER happens is what it needed for me to expand my heart and to choose Love again and again; to surrender to whatever is destined by a superior intellect of SATI for the world in its totality. It is a conscious surrender to the will of SATI. It is believing in the Divine Truth that: only Love exists.

“Be drunk with love, for love is all that exists.”

Rumi

What is the Right Path?

The right path for you is the path that speaks to your heart and soul. Select teachers whose words and style “click” with you. My teachers are listed at the end. I tried many different paths until I realized Devotional Non-Duality, or the Path of Love is for me. My friend Sepi walks the path of Neo-Non-duality. She loves Tony Parson and Bob (the Sailor) Adamson.

Here’s what Rumi says regarding the path to choose:

“Why are you knocking at every other door? Go, knock at the door of your own heart.”

And:

“I looked in temples, churches, and mosques. But I found the Divine within my heart.”

So, trust yourself and:

***“Let yourself be silently drawn by the strange pull of what you really love.
It will not lead you astray.”***

Rumi

That fateful night when I was extremely destitute and was trying to deal with my predicament, Sepi, my best friend introduced me to three concepts. The Holographic Universe or the world as an illusion was the first. I readily accepted it and believed it to be Divine Truth immediately and yet I didn’t know how it would impact me in the days to come. I will explain more as we go on.

Now we’ll talk about the second concept she revealed to me and just as the first one, I knew it to Divine Truth also. So ready to roll?

Pause, Investigate and Contemplate

1. Inquire deeply into the nature of “I. Who am I? Am I this body? Am I the mind? Am I the thoughts? If I am none of these, then who am I? You will not find the answer quickly. But the

inquiry opens up your awareness and realization. For complete instructions on the I AM inquiry see [Ramana Mahrshi's I AM Instructions](#).

2. Watch one of Roger Castillo's videos, any of them. He's the best and clearest teacher on non-duality I have found.
3. Do you have a pull toward a particular teaching? What calls to you? What tickles your heart and soul?

Chapter 5: Do We Do What We Do, Scooby Dooby Doo?

***“You are free to do what you want,
but you are not free to want what you want.”***

Arthur Schopenhauer

German philosopher, Essays and Aphorisms

“WhAAT? What does this quote mean?” you ask. We have all lived our lives with the mistaken belief that we are in control of our actions. We’ve been told again and again to “take charge of your life!”, “Grab the bull by the horns!”, “Just Do It!”, “Make it happen!” And all of us, including me think that everything we’ve done, we’ve done ourselves and take pride and feel shame for our actions. Yes?

“The self, deluded by egoism, thinketh: 'I am the doer.'”

Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita

“WhAAT? That’s nonsense!” You say! This Divine Truth is very difficult to accept, VERY! Even though I knew it to be The Truth, My Ego Mind refused to accept it.

I went to UC Berkeley at 16, I graduated and started working when I was 20. I travelled around the world by myself at 30. And when I got back, I got my master’s degree and worked in the high-tech industry for over 20 years. I was very successful and made boat loads of money! I had a designer life, designed with meticulous attention and care. ***“I DID it! All of it!”*** I insisted.

Then I had a nervous breakdown and lost everything even custody of my son. I fu*king failed him and felt so ashamed. *I* failed him. It happened after a horrendous move, that I had planned perfectly. It was supposed to be an amazing future for us. But alas, it didn’t go as I had planned. And perhaps this was the second time in my entire life, where things didn’t go my way. Shock! “How could this be? I thought about my planning and the events over and over. There was nothing wrong with my planning, I knew for sure. “What caused this then?” I kept asking over and over. I felt like a ticking bomb.

“You are not the doer, Niloo,” my friend Sepi said. “None of us are.”

It was as if a cold bucket of ice was poured over my scorching head. “No?” I said weakly. “Then it wasn’t my fault!” I thought to myself, and the weight of my suffering (guilt, blame, shame, and anxiety about the future) lifted, and I felt such a relief!

Harry (Science) Met Sally (Spirituality) of Non-Doership

Over the centuries, the great sages and even scientists have told us that we are in fact not responsible for our actions. Simply said, ***there is no free will!*** No! Hard to believe? Yes! Many of the philosophers, like St. Augustine have told us differently: “we ***have*** free will.” He posits that God could not have created evil; therefore, evil is a choice we make.

But that is not accurate! I can give you many quotes from sages, philosophers, scientist, but I

will keep it to two examples:

"The present difficulty is that man thinks he is the doer. But it is a mistake. It is the higher power which does everything and man is only a tool."

Ramana Maharshi

One quote from the scientist:

"Human beings, in their thinking, feeling and acting are not free agents but are as causally bound as the stars in their motion."

Albert Einstein

And one more from Rumi! (Can't move on without him!!)

***Everything is painted with the brush of the Invisible One.
Let us follow the hidden signs and find The Painter.***

Rumi



As it has become possible to study the living human brain, researchers have begun to watch neural decision-making processes at work. Studies have revealed unexpected things about human agency and volition.

Science tells us that decisions occur before you are conscious of them. In a famous experiment in the 1980s, physiologist Benjamin Libet used an electroencephalogram (EEG) to demonstrate that activity in the brain's motor cortex can be detected 300 milliseconds before a person feels they've decided to move. The study concludes:

“The experimental findings led us to the conclusion that voluntary acts can be initiated by unconscious cerebral processes **before** [emphasis added] conscious intention appears but that conscious control over the actual motor performance of the acts remains possible.”⁵⁹

Here, as before, when Harry (Science) met Sally (Spirituality), there was a lot of skepticism. Libet's interpretation of the ramping up of brain activity prior to the report of conscious "will" continues to draw heavy criticism. But repeated experiments have replicated Libet's findings.

As American neuroscientist and philosopher Sam Harris tells us:

“Free will is an illusion. Our wills are simply not of our own making. Thoughts and intentions emerge from background causes of which we are unaware and over which we exert no conscious control. We do not have the freedom we think we have.”⁶⁰

You can conduct your own research on neuroscience of free will. But for me, as I said before, I was convinced by studying many spiritual teachings that all said exactly the same thing: **we are**

⁵⁹ Libet, Benjamin (1985). "Unconscious cerebral initiative and the role of conscious will in voluntary action" <https://web.archive.org/web/20131219012821/http://selfpace.uconn.edu/class/ccs/Libet1985UcsCerebralInitiative.pdf>, December 2013.

⁶⁰ Sam Harris, "Free Will," 2012

not the doers and by looking at my own life experience and deep contemplation.

Sam Harris gives great instructions for contemplation:

“Take a moment to think about the context in which your next decision will occur: You did not pick your parents or the time and place of your birth. You didn't choose your gender or most of your life experiences. You had no control whatsoever over your genome or the development of your brain. And now your brain is making choices on the **basis of preferences and beliefs** [emphasis added] that have been hammered into it over a lifetime — by your genes, your physical development since the moment you were conceived, and the interactions you have had with other people, events, and ideas. Where is the freedom in this?”⁶¹

***Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may.
Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it.
This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain silent.***

Ramana Maharshi

So basically,

***Que Será, Será, whatever will be will be.
The future is not ours to see, Que Será, Será*** ⁶²



The Illusion of Doership

If we look at our thoughts, we believe we are the “thinker” who produces the thoughts. As Robert Powell, professor of biology at Avila University in Kansas City, and author, points out, this notion only comes in **after** the thought:

“Most of us think there is a thinker who produces his thoughts; that is the conventional wisdom. But if you examine it more closely, you will find it is the other way around. There is the thought and immediately thereafter another phenomenon takes place. A “thinker” comes in who reacts with the original thought. Now the interesting thing is that that “thinker” is only another thought, or, more accurately, is made up of thoughts and memories and is therefore not truly “personal.” In other words, the thinker as such does not actually exist but is a concept that has been accepted through lack of examination; it is the image one has of oneself.”⁶³

How about our actions, do we do what we do, Scooby Dooby Dooooo? 😊

***There never has been, and never will be, a “doer”, no one has ever “done” anything.
Everything is a happening according to Source or God.***

Roger Castillo

⁶¹ Sam Harris, “Free Will,” 2012

⁶² In case you don't know, this is a song by Song by Doris Day and Frank De Vol, sang in 1955

⁶³ Robert Powell, “Dialogues on Reality: An Exploration into the Nature of Our Ultimate Identity”, 1996.

And Rumi explains non-doership most beautifully:

***“I am a mountain. What I say is an echo of what you say.
I am a painting being painted.
I am the lock. A key slips in to help me make an opening sound.
This talking is not mine.”***
Rumi

What do religions of the world say?

Christianity:

“Thy will be done!”
The Holy Bible, Mathews, 6:10

Islam:

“Inshallah!” – God Willing,
one of the most important tenets

Hinduism:

“O God, Thou art the doer, Thou art the experiencer; Thou art the speaker, Thou art the listener.”
Hindu Scripture

Judaism:

Though I didn't find a quote in Judaism, I did find articles on free will. Judaism belief says,

“We are limited by the nature of the world God has created. We can't choose to grow wings and fly, or to change winter into summer. Neither can we foil—or interrupt for a moment—God's plan for His creation, or even our personal destiny.”⁶⁴

And this to me sounds like non-doership.

EVERYTHING is SATI in Action! SATI's will is being done at every moment and we are just instruments.

“God alone is the Doer, and none else’ – that is knowledge. I am not the doer; I am a mere instrument in His hand. Therefore I say: ‘O Mother, Thou art the Operator and I am the machine. Thou art the Indweller and I am the house. Thou art the Driver and I am the carriage. I move as Thou movest me. I do as Thou makest me do. I speak as Thou makest me speak. Not I, not I, but Thou, but Thou.’

Sri Ramakrishna, Hindu Mystic and Spiritual Leader

Jean Klein, non-duality master of Advaita in the tradition of Ramana Maharshi explains:

“When you act, you are one with the action, it is only afterwards that the ego appropriates the act from which it was absent and says “I have done this.” At the moment of acting there

⁶⁴ Torat Menachem Hitvaduyot, volume 5 (5712, book 2), page 191.

is only acting, without an actor.”⁶⁵

Non-doership applies not only to thoughts, emotions and feelings, but also to words, actions, behaviors and habits. All of it!!

Convinced?

If not, here's what Dennis Waite, author of *Back to the Truth: 5000 years of Advaita* says:

“...we are not the doer. Who we really are does not ‘run’ – it is the body, specifically the legs, that runs, powered by the heart and lungs etc. We do not “speak” – this is performed by the pharynx and the mouth, triggered by the relevant part of the brain. And all of the other innumerable activities are clearly being carried out by various parts of the body, while we merely observe”⁶⁶

The heart is beating by itself, hair is growing by itself, even thoughts are appearing by themselves. From head to toe, it is obvious that we are not the doers. So, why is it that we cling to this false sense of doership and control?

I talked about this in ***Awakening***. The Ego Mind, a mental/psychological construct, maintains incredible control over our lives because it wants what it wants and it wants it now, and knows that it may not be the best thing for our life, but doesn't care. Concept of non-doership takes the power out of its hands and gives it to someone/something else. So, it lives in Fear. Once the illusion of control is dismantled by the wisdom of non-doership, Ego will not be able to dominate and control us. The greatest threat to Ego is not physical threats, but our spiritual awakening. It, therefore, is fu&king scared of its annihilation.

Freedom

When I first heard of this wisdom, I let out a sigh of relief, “phew! It wasn't my fault!” It wasn't anyone's fault. All the “could haves” and “should haves,” and “I wasn't good enough,” guilt and shame fall away, replaced by an awesome sense of freedom and relief!

The falling away of illusion of control and doership, will give you an incredible freedom not experienced before.

Roger Castillo, one of my non-duality teachers says it well:

“There is tremendous freedom available in realizing that you are not the doer. With this realization comes the dropping away of guilt for so-called mistakes, for you see that your “mistakes” were not your doing. Feelings of hatred towards others dissolve as well, as you see that no one has really ever done anything harmful to you. As Ramesh Balsekar said: “Events happen. Nobody does anything. All things happen exactly as they are supposed to

⁶⁵ Jane Klein, “I am”, 1989

⁶⁶ Dennis Waite, “Back to The Truth: 5000 Years Of Advaita”, (p. 46).

happen, according to the will of God.”⁶⁷

Imagine you’re taking an expensive bus trip. You’re sure that the driver knows both how to drive the bus and how to choose the best route. With nothing else to worry about, you’re free to relax in your seat, gaze out the window, and enjoy each minute of the trip. Right? I mean seriously, who would you like to be the bus driver, you or Source of All that Is (SATI)? How arrogant of us to think we know better and do better than the Source?

The only challenge you will have is that the Ego will NOT want to relinquish control and you will keep falling back to what feels natural, being in control. Except that this is a false sense and illusion of control. In the next chapter I will give you practices that helped me remember this wisdom.

Destiny, Kismet, Fate

My grandmother was a very spiritual woman and I used to wake up 4 AM during the Ramadan to be with her. It was the only time I could be alone with her. The house was quiet and still, the sun was just coming up. We listened to the Ramadan morning prayer and talked. Those moments were so sacred to me and were some of the most beautiful moments of my life. She always used to say, “it’s kismet,” when she heard of bad things befalling a person. And I was like, “No way! We have choices, we have control over our destinies.”

“Predestination, in Christian theology, is the doctrine that all events have been willed by God, usually with reference to the eventual fate of the individual soul.”⁶⁸

Is life predestined? Has the story/script of our lives already been written?

Here’s what ACIM says:

“Time is a trick, a sleight of hand, a vast illusion in which figures come and go as if by magic. Yet there is a plan behind appearances that does not change. The script is written.”⁶⁹

As I mentioned in **Awakening**, Shakespeare says we are all actors and actresses on a stage called life.

***“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.”
Shakespeare***

Imagine your life as a movie; played, directed, choreographed, and shot by SATI. You are just the

⁶⁷ Roger Castillo, “Seeing you’re not the doer is not bad news,”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFBpXsn1Evl&t=4155s>

⁶⁸ Wikipedia, “Predestination”, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination>

⁶⁹ A Course in Miracles Workbook Lesson 158, <https://acim.org/acim/en/s/564#4:1-3> | W-158.4:1-3

actor playing the unfolding of the drama of life.

***“Life in its entirety from the beginning of time to the end is an unfathomable creation of Source.
Everything is destined to happen as part of the story of life”***

Roger Castillo

So, the answer to “Is life predestined and has the story/script of our lives already been written?” is a Yes! Life is a chain of happenings that are predestined or predetermined.

Roger Castillo explains:

“What is happening now is part of a bigger picture that started 13.8 billion years ago, that this moment is the crest of forward moving wave of life.”⁷⁰

So basically, what he’s saying is that the unfolding of life is impacted by the initial impulse of creation, resulting in what is happening now.



I once saw a video of a professional pool player with an array of masterful skill shots.⁷¹ And I was like Wow! This is how life is!! In this picture, the player shoots the ball; it zigzags through the black balls and falls in line where the hole/space is in the heart. What’s this got to do with Life? Well, in the hands of a grand-master player, when first the ball is hit, he knows EXACTLY what path it is going to take and EXACTLY where it will eventually end up. Right? And so it is with SATI. If the creation started 13.8 billion years ago, it is going through an exact path and will end up exactly where SATI wants it to.

I spend most of my life with the erroneous belief that we write the script of our own life, and I used my will to bulldoze through life, always fighting and struggling against the currents! Now that I have realized everything is pre-written, I can just play the role to the best of my ability, knowing that the direction and production of my life story is in the hands of the greatest director and producer, SATI!

Why Bother?

You might think if we are not the doers, and don’t have free will, then we’re just puppets! Many who hear about non-doership ask me: “Why are we here then? The simplest answer Roger Castillo gives is that we are “being lived.”

In the desire of the One to know Himself, we exist.

Rumi

⁷⁰ Roger Castillo, “Predestination, inevitability, destiny & free will”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvwntc-IQk4>

⁷¹ You can see the video here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w9VaDCg6-ot9NOFXgSNf8yjUSMGX0ox7/view?usp=sharing>

I and many believe Ego was created as a false sense of separation to obscure the supreme, underlying unity of SATI. The veil of separation was required to allow SATI to experience life in various and multitude of expressions through us.

Therefore, our lives are an opportunity for SATI to play, explore and creatively express life, all the different possibilities and permutations of it.

***“The cosmos is within us. We are made of star-stuff.
We are a way for the universe to know itself.”***

*Carl Sagan, American astronomer,
Planetary scientist, cosmologist, astrophysicist, astrobiologist and author*

According to Sufi cosmology, God's reason for the creation of this universe and mankind is the "manifestation" and "recognition" of himself/herself. Through this dialogue the Creator uses the mirror of humanity to reveal Itself to Itself as it is stated in Hidden Treasure Hadith by Najmeddin Razi, a renowned Sufi mystic 72:

***“I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known.
Hence I created the world so that I would be known.”***⁷³

Of course, we don't really know, do we? This may be just a beautiful story. So, take it as you will. 😊

Non-Doership Paradox

I want to address a non-doership paradox that will inevitably come up when reading this book. You might think “why bother learning about spiritual practices? I'm not the doer any way.”

Roger Castillo explains that:

“We are a product of our genes and up-to-date conditioning.”

Everyone functions in each moment based on an impulse that arises (based on our genes and up-to-date conditioning). He explains the process of spiritual growth as follows:

“Life it's a happening, and these happenings drive us forward. Spontaneous arising of life, the story of life, is a story of cause and effect. The experience of life is and experience of time and space and cause and effect. Life doesn't just put up an oak tree. It doesn't just appear without rhyme or reason. Everything in life unfolds as if it is based on cause and effect. Spiritual change is also based on apparent cause and effect. So, life puts us in a in a place where new conditioning is delivered. And change happens.”⁷⁴

So, the fact that you are now reading this book means that life is delivering new conditioning

⁷² Hadiths are a collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad which, with accounts of his daily practice. They constitute a major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Koran.

⁷³ Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Hidden_Treasure

⁷⁴ Roger Castillo, “Seeing you're not the doer is not bad news”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFBpXsn1Evl>

and an opportunity for spiritual growth.

The Good, The Bad and The Beautiful

So, the **good news** is you are not the doer – what a freedom!

The **bad news** is you are responsible for your actions in the World of Ten Thousand Things! Yep! You can't claim to the judge: "But I'm not the doer!" Well, that sucks! Doesn't it? Yes. You are bearing witness to your actions (the actions that this body/mind take). The loss of my son was not my doing, but I am still responsible for what resulted from that event. And I have no choice but to keep witnessing the aftermath of my breakdown, including its impact on my son. It is painful but it is what is so. Surrendering to the will of SATI or Universe is the only choice here.

The **beautiful thing** is that the surrendering and witnessing allows you to be in the present moment and that is the ONLY place where the Divine and You connect. It is the ONLY place/time that life, joy, happiness, peace, love occurs.

Conclusion

The belief in personal doership underpins all forms of human suffering. Roger Castillo points out:

"There are 5 causes of suffering: guilt, pride, blame, worry and anxiety, expectation and attachment to outcomes."

When the illusion of control and personal doership falls away, these causes of suffering no longer arise.

***"Life is a happening and not 'your' doing.
As this simple insight sinks deeper and deeper,
the ingrained sense of personal doership falls away and
it becomes apperceived that we are, always have been, and always will be, 'being lived'.
Roger Castillo***

And one more:

***We are all, always, being lived according to Life's will. With this falling away of personal doership
comes the falling away of suffering,
and this reveals our birth-right of peace of mind."
Ramana Maharshi***

Most people are just surviving, just as I was before I learned this wisdom. But it is not enough to just survive. Life is too precious to waste on dealing with problems and without love, joy and abundance.

***"Success and inner peace are your birthrights.
You are a child of God and as such, you are entitled to a life of joy, love and happiness.
Dr. Wayne Dyer***

Next, we will talk about how to *actually thrive* in a world where most people struggle, a world that seems to bring nothing but fear and suffering.

Pause, Investigate and Contemplate

1. What is your reaction to the concept of non-doership and that you are not the doer in your life?
2. Investigate your life for yourself. Look to see if you are the doer. Trace back each action to a thought to a previous action or thought. Go back as far as you can. Did it have anything to do with you? Or is it just an occurring?
3. Investigate where in your life do you have regrets, shame or guilt for your actions, your decisions? Bring the concept of non-doership to these thoughts and feelings. What happens?
4. How about the concept of “life is already pre-determined?” What are your reactions and how do you feel about it?

Chapter 6: The Way of Love

The way of love is not a subtle argument.

The door there is devastation.

Birds make great sky-circles of their freedom. How do they learn it?

They fall, and in falling, they're given wings.

Rumi

The path is clear, and many sacred texts and renowned sages have pointed the way: let go of the World of Ten Thousand Things, and the experience of the senses (driven by Ego mind) to be as Rumi says:

*"...free of who I was, free of presence, free of dangerous fear, hope,
free of mountainous wanting."*

There are many different sects of Sufism and different practices, some of which have gone astray – secret societies lead by false sages dedicated to the path of the Ego, requiring unquestioning subservience and devotion. And that is quite unfortunate. My recommendation is to have your “Ego Sensors” on before committing wholeheartedly to a particular sage/guru.

Personally, I have yet to find a living avatar to whom I could commit and dedicate my life. But I have found Rumi to be the most insightful teacher and his path, the most direct. So, I will give you a little bit of background on him.

Rumi met Shams, the wondering dervish in 1244 and had a pivotal experience of Divine Love through Shams as an avatar⁷⁵. This experience of Divine Love, longing, and loss turned Rumi into the poet we all know.

“His poems—ghazals (about 30,000 verses) and many robā‘īyāt (“quatrains”)—reflect the different stages of his love, until, as his son writes, “he found Shams in himself, radiant like the moon”. The complete identification of lover and beloved is expressed by his inserting the name of Shams instead of his name.”⁷⁶

This mystical and soul-stirring friendship between Rumi and Shams Tabriz was built upon mutual exploration of shunned wisdom and dangerous truth that those who surrounded these men could not understand or appreciate.

Through long contemplation and conversation with Shams, Rumi was able to annihilate the ego and reach Divine Love. His Masnavi, the greatest mystical poems in world literature, consists of “six books of poetry that together amount to around 25,000 verses or 50,000 lines”.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Avatar is a manifestation of a deity or released soul in bodily form on earth; an incarnate divine teacher

⁷⁶ Britannica, Rūmī, Sufi Mystic and Poet, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rumi>

⁷⁷ Wikipedia, Masnavi, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masnavi>

All of Rumi's Masnavi and Dīvân-e Shams are "his efforts to explain and elaborate on love, a love that cut him away from ordinary life and transformed him into a poet whose words are an endless interpretation of this divine mystery."⁷⁸

Rumi himself said this of Masnavi:

"This is the Book of the Masnavi, which is the roots of the roots of the roots of the Religion in respect of (its) unveiling the mysteries of attainment (to the Truth) and of certainty; and which is the ***greatest science of God and the clearest way to God*** [emphasis added] and the most manifest evidence of God."

In essence, Rumi claims that the guidance in Masnavi is the path to God, overriding all previous guidance (including the Quran). I mean, WOW! How brave he was to claim this!

Throughout the poems, told as stories, he shows us the Way of Love.

Divine Love

There is no one, anywhere, who is not looking for love; no soul who, at some level, at some time, does not long for feelings of companionship and love. Every human being on earth wants to know he or she is cared for, loved, valued. I believe this longing comes from our soul that is looking to merge with our Source who is Divine Love.

Love is the energizing elixir of the Universe, the cause and effect of all Harmony.

Rumi

When Rumi speaks of Love, he's speaking of Divine Love, not to be mistaken with earthly love! Earthly love is conditional and usually expressed through Ego desires (selfish and self-centered) always demanding something, while Divine Love is infinite and unconditional. It involves overcoming the selfish impulses of the Ego.

It is beautifully expressed by Jesus in the Holy Bible:

***“Love is patient, love is kind.
Love does not envy,
is not boastful, is not conceited,
does not act improperly,
is not selfish, is not provoked,
and does not keep a record of wrongs.

Love finds no joy in unrighteousness
but rejoices in the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends.***

⁷⁸ AnnMarie Schimmel. (1377/1998). Man Bâdam o To Âtash, translated by F. Badre'î.

***But as for prophecies,
they will come to an end;
as for languages, they will cease;
as for knowledge, it will come to an end.”
Holman Christian Standard Bible, Corinthians 13:4-8***

In ***Awakening***, the first practice was to choose the path of Love. Now I will take it a step further and talk about ***Living the path of Love***. Love is the strongest force and has the highest vibration in the world – the vibration of SATI.

***“Love is an emerald.
its brilliant light will slay any dragons you meet on this treacherous path.”***

Rumi

But Rumi is not the only sage that points to the Path of Love; all spiritual sages advise us that Love is the way.

***“When you truly feel this equal love for all,
when your heart has expanded so much that it embraces the whole of creation,
you will certainly not feel like giving up this or that.
You will simply drop off from secular life as a ripe fruit drops from the branch of a tree.
You will feel that the whole world is your home.”***

Ramana Maharshi

Jesus told his disciples:

***A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another:
just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.***

John 13:34–35, New International Version

So, the Way of Love is the pathway that leads to rising above the duality of this world and the suffering brought about by the unending desires of the Ego. The Way of Love leads to the experience of the Divine. Rumi explains:

***Through your love
existence and nonexistence merge.
All opposites unite.
All that is profane
becomes sacred again.***

Rumi

Only Love is Real

Many spiritual sages also emphasize that ***only love is real and all else is illusion***.

***“In this world of illusion, take nothing other than this cup of wine;
In this playhouse, don't play any games but love.”***

Hafez

Marianne Williamson explains:

“Only love is real, and when we're not thinking with love, since only love is real, then we're actually not thinking at all. We're hallucinating. And that's what this world is: a mass hallucination, where fear seems more real than love. Fear is an illusion. Our craziness, paranoia, anxiety and trauma are literally all imagined. That is not to say they don't exist for us as human beings. They do. But our fear is not our ultimate reality, and it does not replace the truth of who we really are. Our love, which is our real self, doesn't die, but merely goes underground.”⁷⁹

Journey of Love

“Your heart knows the way. Run in that direction.”

Rumi

So, what does it mean to live or follow the Path of Love?

It means living from the heart vs. the Ego; to strive to make Love the center of everything we do, say, and feel. It is to recognize that SATI, in its infinite wisdom and Love has planned/written a marvelous script for our lives and to surrender to the will of Love. So, our goal is to connect with SATI and the Infinite Love that can be experienced, here and now.

I want to clarify that I have not completed my journey and am still on the path. You can think of me as a “scout” – like a scout on a wagon train in the Old West, whose job it was to ride ahead looking for a way over the Rocky Mountains to reach the Pacific Ocean”.⁸⁰

I have mapped this route by reading many different maps from wisdom shared by many who have gone before me, from many cultures and countries. I've combined all overlapping routes to put together this map for myself which I share with you. You may find other scouts along the way who point you to a different direction. Follow your heart always.

Here are the stages of this journey I have mapped:

1. Awakening

The journey starts when one starts to experience discontent: is this all there is to life? The external world with all its pleasures and pains loses its attraction. There begins to be a sense of angst – a feeling of anxiety or dread about the human condition or the state of the world in general. You begin to read or watch spiritual material. This is the Divine Call to home, a journey back toward SATI.

There is a candle in your heart, ready to be kindled.

⁷⁹ Marianne Williamson, A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles"

⁸⁰ Steven Davis, "Butterflies are Free to Fly", p 6.

***There is a void in your soul, ready to be filled.
You feel it, don't you?***

Rumi

A Course in Miracles, workbook lesson 183 explains this well:

“This world you seem to live in is not home to you. And somewhere in your mind you know that this is true ³. A memory of home keeps haunting you, as if there were a place that called you to return, although you do not recognize the voice, nor what it is the voice reminds you of. ⁴. Yet still you feel an alien here, from somewhere all unknown. ⁵. Nothing so definite that you could say with certainty you are an exile here. Just a persistent feeling, sometimes not more than a tiny throb, at other times hardly remembered, actively dismissed, but surely to return to mind again.”⁸¹

Notice the discontent, the angst you experience in daily living. Listen to the Divine calling you home.

This is the start of the spiritual path. You look for a spiritual teacher and start to read or listen to spiritual material.

2. Inner work

Inner work is the practice of shining the light of your awareness inwards. It is looking within and noticing everything. It seeing the barriers that have developed over the years and removing them so that the light of our Soul or Divine Self can shine and guide our decisions. Rumi calls this polishing the mirror of your heart.

***Do you know why your mirror doesn't reflect?
The rust has not been cleansed from its surface.”***

–Rumi, Masnavi Book 1, v33-34

A Course in Miracles, chapter 16, Forgiveness of All Illusions says:

“Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.”⁸²

These barriers, which I explained in detail in **Awakening**, must be removed so that we can experience our true Self and Divine Love.



***“On this path, chisel and scrub
Don't be idle until your final breath.”***

Rumi, Masnavi, Book 1, v1834-1835

⁸¹ A Course in Miracles, <https://acim.org/acim/en/s/590#1:1-6> | W-182.1:1-6

⁸² In **Awakening** I mistakenly attributed this quote to Rumi. It is actually a quote from ACIM.

Polish the mirror of the heart and chisel away the stuff that is not you.

The nature your Divine Self is Love, thus for Love to shine through, you must be relentless and persistent in investigating anything that inhibits this Love. Shine the light of your awareness upon the shadow/darkness within you to reveal its cause. This requires radical self-honesty, and it requires courage. It can be a painful process and yet it is necessary to free you from the chains of this world and its illusions. Ego will fight you every step of the way and do its utmost to keep you in the world of illusions. That is its purpose.

But removing and resolving every last distortion that covers the mirror of your heart and soul to allow Divine Love to shine brightly is part of the process.

Much of **Awakening** was about removing the barriers to Love and your Divine Self. So, please go back and re-read as necessary to find out what barriers you still have.

So, you find your barriers, now what?

3. Love, Love, Love Yourself and Your Life

“Whaat?” you say!!! Yes! If you noticed, the quote “Your task is not to seek love” is from an ACIM Chapter named Forgiveness of Illusions. Your barriers were created because you believed in Ego and the World of Illusion. Remember, also from ACIM, “Only Love is real.” All else is an illusion.

Once you find a darkness/shadow within yourself, the only thing you must do is embrace. Forgive yourself. And love yourself as you are. Period!

Love yourself, all of you, even the shadows. For the first time I truly understand what self-love REALLY means. It is MUCH more than taking care of yourself. It’s truly loving yourself EXACTLY as you are, flaws, warts, ugliness, and beauty, all of it wrapped in you. No fixing, improving, or transforming yourself.

Our only work is to see our shadows, our barriers to love. Acknowledge them. Embrace them. Forgive them and ourselves. And finally love ourselves completely.

From my earliest memories, I recall always thinking there was something wrong with me. I have worked 50 years to fix myself because I was different than other people. However, from old sacred and spiritual practices to new age affirmations, to non-duality teachings, they all tell us **we don’t need fixing and we’re whole and complete as we are**. I think I had heard this a million times before but the urge to fix-change-improve myself was overwhelming and perhaps my most central goal in life. After all, I was “broken”!

For the first time, I have been able to see the depth of ugliness in myself and accept it and LOVE it. It is not MY ugliness, or yours, or his or theirs. It is Ugliness as an “arising” in the World of Illusions. It is in all of us, impacting all of us. It is the same with beauty, kindness and generosity.

It is not mine or yours to give or judge but only to experience. Remember: **we are NOT the doers!** We are the one that witnesses and experiences.

Understanding this has given me such power. I am finally free, free to be who I am, free to just be. All I must do is to polish the mirror of my heart.

So, forgive yourself. Embrace and love ALL of you!

And then Love your life. Love every minute of your life Notice what a fabulous role you've been given and how great you are at it. "What an amazing life I have," I often exclaimed to friend Sepi, "full of juicy drama, betrayals, joys and passions and adventures. It's absolutely delicious!!!"

4. Merging Inner and Outer Worlds

Once you begin to polish the mirror and love yourself, you begin to experience new levels of Love and joy.

Now your task is to bring that Love and joy into the World of Illusions. Bring Inner Work of the heart to the World of Illusion.

Now the two worlds can be "married." Now the outer world is a direct reflection of your inner world of Love. Connected to the inner, sacred space you bring that awareness into the world and consciously live life from there. You walk in the world, aware that your Divinity. A bridge is made, and you can abide in harmony, joy and love even in the World of Illusions.

When you are grounded in Love, Ego is no longer the center and dominant factor of your life. Ego is used to function in the world, but you Soul is running the show!

For me this was not a sudden occurrence but a gradual process. I would lose the connection to the inner world and get caught up in Ego's games. I continued to strengthen the Love and connection to the Source (SATI) through the practices I mentioned in **Awakening** and here in this book.

5. Blossoming and Thriving

Your interactions with the world are now enveloped with Love. The higher frequency of Love permeates your life. And this is when you begin to thrive! Yes! Without any effort, life begins to manifest as the result of who you truly are.

Follow your bliss and be of service!

You begin to experience prosperity and abundance. Things happen as if by magic! You realize we are here to fulfill our role within the complex operating mechanism of the universe, making us aware that our tiny grain of sand is key to creating a better world for all.



This stage is so much fun! You begin to do only things that you love and matter to you. You still have to deal with your worldly affairs (paying bills, working, taking care of leaking roof! Etc.), but you don't take anything seriously. Life's challenges are no longer stressing. You don't become emotional and/or breakdown. You feel light, energetic and cheerful. You laugh at what seemed to be a horrendous breakdown before.



Throughout history, enlightened ones are always belly laughing. Why? Because they have recognized that this world is an illusion and not to be taken seriously. Life is a playground for them, full of joy and fun.

As a child, do you remember falling in the playground, getting up, shaking the dust off and getting back in the game? A little scrape wasn't going to keep you from having a fabulous time!

In this stage, you will return to the innocence of a child without stories, belief systems or defensiveness. Your childlike nature will return and you will blossom into full bloom!

6. Being in Wei Wu Wei

As you continue to the path of love, the veil of the World of Illusion drops, maybe for an instant, maybe forever, depending on the person. This is the stage of Void – it's a major shift in consciousness, it's completely quiet and empty, and 'there's nothing more to do'. It can seem quite lonely and scary. It is also quite peaceful.

The Advaita and Buddhist traditions call this stage the enlightened state. You can stay here for years, never moving beyond it because it can be comfortable staying there, especially for those who experience the Void for the first time.

So, beware: this is NOT enlightenment (according to Rumi or other Persian Mystics.) There is one more stage left in the evolution.

While you are there, follow the ancient Taoism practice of Wu Wei which literally meaning "inexertion", or "inaction."

Be present and do nothing. Here just being with what is so is critical.

Don't try to analyze, control or try to get out of the void. The more you resist, the more it persists. If you get tired of the Void and feel impatient/restless, resist going back into the World of Illusions. Instead, be patient; let it transform you, knowing there's nothing you need to do to 'help it'.

At this time, only do what you feel love to do or are inclined to in the moment. Just be present and continue to polish the mirror and focus on Love.

7. Soaring

Once all the barriers have been removed, and you are enveloped with love, Divine Union occurs.

The Beloved has permeated every cell of my body Of myself there remains only a name, everything else is Him.⁸³

Rumi

The Golden Sufi Center, in an online article explains:

“Love burns away the impurities which cover our heart and soul, until gradually we begin to taste the truth of whom we really are: not a separate self, a dysfunctional ego, but part of a whirling, cosmic dance in which every cell praises and glorifies God.”⁸⁴

“How sweet is the oneness of the Friend [i.e., God] with His friends [i.e, creation]!

Catch the spirit and clasp it to your bosom.

Mortify rebellious form till it wastes away: unearth the treasure of Unity!”

Rumi

In the union with SATI (God), the “I” completely disappears, and ecstasy and bliss is experienced.

***My place is the no-place
My image is without face
Neither of body nor the soul
I am of the Divine Whole.***

***I eliminated duality with joyous laughter
Saw the unity of here and the hereafter
Unity is what I sing, unity is what I speak
Unity is what I know, unity is what I seek***

***Intoxicated from the chalice of Love
I have lost both worlds below and above
Sole destiny that comes to me
Is roguery and insobriety.***^{85,86}

Rumi

This Divine Union (union with SATI) and the earnest desire to this union is not only in Sufism

⁸³ Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch, Rumi and Sufism, p. 106.

⁸⁴ The Golden Sufi Center, <https://goldensufi.org/divine-intoxication-rumi/>

⁸⁵ Here, insobriety and drunkenness means being intoxicated with Love. Roguery points to the fact that the Sufi mystics had gone rogue and separated from the mainstream Muslim believers. They were considered heretics because they claimed they knew and were the Divine Truth.

⁸⁶ Translated by Shariar Shahriar, <https://www.rumionfire.com/shams/rumi116.htm>

tradition, but also in Christianity. Albert Magnus' medieval classic, Union with God, begins with
"Surely the most deeply-rooted need of the human soul, its purest aspiration, is for the
closest possible union with God."⁸⁷

St. John of The Cross, one of the greatest Christian mystics and Spanish poet, writes of the steps
and experience of Divine Union:

"In 'Noche oscura,' perhaps his best-known work, he describes the process by which the soul
sheds its attachment to everything and eventually passes through a personal experience of
Christ's Crucifixion to his glory. The lyric consists of eight stanzas "in which the soul sings of
the fortunate adventure that it had in passing through the dark night of faith...to union with
the Beloved."^{88, 89}

In summary, these 7 phases are covered in my books as follows:

Awakening – phases 1 and 2

Thriving – phases 3,4 and 5

Soaring – phases 6 and 7 (not written or published yet.)

The phases (or stations as Persian mystics call them) were mapped by me by combining wisdom
from different gurus, masters and mystics. Different spiritual teachings may have different
practices for each stage but as far as I know the stages are the same.

Let me tell you again, this spiritual path will lead to annihilation of your Ego and it is NOT going
to make it easy for you. It will fight you using the Thinking Mind. It will strategize, using your
thoughts, desires, stories and belief system to avert you from the Path. And that is why Rumi
and Hafez say, "you have to go out of your mind!" So, remember:

***Be wild and crazy and drunk with Love,
if you are too careful, LOVE will not find you.***

Hafez

There is so much to say about Divine Love. As I learn and practice more and more, I understand
what Rumi said:

***"Love does not fit in conversation.
Love is an endless ocean, with no beginning or end."***

Rumi

⁸⁷ Albert Magnus, Union with God, p.8

⁸⁸ Britannica, St. John of the Cross, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-of-the-Cross#ref115662>

⁸⁹ Noche oscura means the dark night of the soul. Many have spoken about this, including two of my beloved
teachers, Dr. Hawkins and Eckhart Tolle. It is an extremely difficult and painful period in one's life, leading to
sudden falling of the Veil of Illusion. This state of sudden enlightenment or Satori in Japanese is also believed by
Zen Buddhists. Whether suddenly or over a period of time, the desire to return home to SATI is in all of us to
various degrees and will guide us as we start the journey.

Soul Companions

Soul companions are friends that are on the same journey as you. A soul companion (not to be mistaken with soulmate) is a friend you have a strong connection with, who understands you and gives you a sense of peace and yet challenges you to grow and be the finest version of yourself. Through deep conversations, contemplation and dialogue, the mysteries of the world unfold.

“Rumi always works in tandem, with a friend, or friends. Or, to say it another way, his poetry is communal, with very personal touches. Out of his deep friendship with Shams Tabriz came the overflowing creativity of the collection he calls The Works of Shams Tabriz.”⁹⁰

This shared experience of being alive with deep soulful conversations, the sharing of mysteries, confusions, miracles, and understanding can only be had with soul companions.

***“This is a gathering of Lovers.
In this gathering there is no high, no low,
no smart, no ignorant, no special assembly,
no grand discourse, no proper schooling required.
There is no master, no disciple.
This gathering is more like a drunken party,
full of tricksters, fools, mad men and women.
This is a gathering of Lovers”***

Rumi

This gathering of Lovers/Soul Companions is a powerful opportunity for spiritual growth and development. My soul companion, Sepi, was instrumental in my awakening and understanding of the concepts and the wisdom that was key to my transformation. In addition, my Masnavi group includes people from all walks of life, drawn to the magic of Rumi’s teachings. Every week, we read a story from Masnavi and have deep conversations where we apply his teachings to our lives. It’s a marvelous experience that we all look so forward to.

***“Last night I left the radish-sellers,
and went back to the dear soul-companions,
from unripe grapes to sweet grape juice.
I went from those who love the dark
out into the moon’s round light.
Then I went to sleep
with those who are fully awake.”***

Rumi

⁹⁰ Coleman Barks, Soul Fury, p3

You are never alone... whatever your nationality, religion or belief, there are soul companions that can share your journey and your experiences. Find your tribe, find your soul companions!

Pause, Investigate and Contemplate

1. What does following the Path of Love mean to you and your life? How would it show up in your life? What experiences will you have? How will your life transform?
2. Investigate your life. Where is Love **not** present? Look at the feelings associated with it (guilt, pride, blame, worry and anxiety, expectation, and attachment to outcomes) and see if you can let go and bring Love to the situation
3. What actions can you take NOW to help you on this path? (Read a book, listen to a talk, have a conversation with a soul-friend, etc.)

Chapter 7: Breaking Free

“When you lose all sense of self, the bonds of a thousand chains will vanish.”

Rumi

Around 5 years ago, I was at the height of my career with a lot of responsibility and making a lot of money. Life was good! We had just moved to be closer to family and friends. It was a new beginning for us, and we were quite excited. Then life threw us a curveball and bam! I lost my job for the first time; I had become quite ill with shingles, and I fell and broke my collar bone. I had no savings whatsoever because I had always had plenty of money coming in.

Armed with the two concepts of world as an illusion and non-doership, I wandered off to Iran to think and gather myself. Three years ago, I finally broke the golden handcuffs that tied me to high-tech and high paying jobs. It was hard but I realized that life was not a life but a constant struggle to keep my head above the water.

I gave you 7 practices in **Awakening**:

1. Making a conscious **choice to live in Love** (instead of Fear)
2. **Acceptance** (of what is **and** what is not)
3. **Letting go and surrendering** feelings
4. **Meditation** (clarifies of mind)
5. **Forgiveness** (is the key to experiencing peace)
6. **Prayer** (is the medium of miracles)
7. **Gratitude** (is the great multiplier)

I will now give you practices that will help you live a life of freedom and unabashed joy; a life that is filled with excitement and happiness. But remember:

*There is a wine for anyone thirsty for love.
Springwater too will be set before you.
We live in a ruin, this body, where treasure is buried.
You are that treasure.
Try to wake from this dream we live.
Don't be afraid. Wake up!*

Rumi

Dear one, wake up from the illusion of this world! Don't be afraid to break the chains. You are NOT this body. You ARE the treasure within.

Practices

Below are the practices I have gathered from many different sources. They have helped me live the Path of Love and thrive in the world. The Way of Love is a way of Life; it is an intentional commitment to a set of practices that help us overcome the world of illusion and touch SATI, in every moment.

But, as Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, aptly says:

“It is easy to speak of Divine Love, to read poems about its ecstatic nature, to dream of being taken in rapture by a divine lover. But to live this passion is different.”⁹¹

So, the Way of Love is not an easy path, no; but with practice, you will remember your True Self, your Divine Self that is Love and this will cause you to blossom and thrive in the world. What is the alternative? Being at the mercy of the events that cause constant suffering and hopelessness. So, give these practices a try and make an effort every day to delve deeper and deeper into thoughts, beliefs and actions that are not Love.

Search out your unloving thoughts in whatever form they appear: uneasiness, depression, blame, pride, anger, fear, worry, attack, insecurity and so on. Whatever form they take, they are unloving and therefore are caused by Fear. Specific situations, events, or personalities you associate with unloving thoughts of any kind are the perfect place to start and dig in. Here are the specific practices:

1. Annihilate your Ego

In Sufism, “fanaw” or (fanaa) is the “passing away” or annihilation of the self. Fanaw means “to die before one dies”, a concept highlighted by famous notable Persian mystics such as Rumi. Æ

*Die, die, die in this love
As you die in this love, you will reach the Spirit.
Die, die and have no fear of this death
Once you rise up from the grave you will receive the Heavens
Die, die and sever the Ego
Ego is the shackles that keeps you captive
Grab an ax to carve a hole in this prison
As you break this prison, you become king and emir
Die, die for the beautiful King (referring to God)
As you die for the King, you also become a famous king
Die, die and rise above this cloud
As you rise up, you become the radiant moon
Be silent, silent. This silence represents Death (of the Ego)
It is because of this silence that you are granted Life.*

Rumi

In **Awakening** I told you a lot about your Ego. Now a step further, I tell you that you must go to war with it. It is the only way to loosen its grip on you.

*“Your worst enemy is hiding within yourself,
and that enemy is your false ego.”*

Rumi

⁹¹ Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, “Divine Intoxication & Rumi”, 2006, <https://goldensufi.org/divine-intoxication-rumi/>

Sages of several spiritual paths advise us to *just* notice the Ego, ignore it and it will vanish; that awareness of the Ego is the key to freedom.

***“All unhappiness is due to the ego. With it comes all your trouble.
If you would deny the ego and scorch it, by ignoring it you would be free.”***

Ramana Maharshi

For me, noticing the Ego was a good place to start; it got me closer to Love, but it was definitely **not sufficient**. I found the beast too strong.

Other sages advise to “kill the Ego as quickly as you can, so that your inner spirit can come to life and attain true awareness.” And I realized this is ultimately what is needed to walk the Path of Love.

Jed McKenna, the author of *Spiritual Warfare* explains:

It is Maya who makes the Dreamstate possible and escape from it nearly impossible. She enables the Dreamstate to exist, and if you wish to awaken from it, **then it’s her you must destroy, layer by layer**. [Emphasis added] But don’t live in metaphors; she’s not a she and she’s not external to you. She’s inside you and those layers are the stuff of which your ego is made. In this war Maya has every advantage but one; truth. **Maya doesn’t exist. Truth does.**

For many sincere people like yourself spirituality is a walk in the park on a sunny day, bubbling with pretty notions of peace on earth and good will toward men. It’s softcore spirituality, full of soft focus and soft lighting and soft music, everything soft and fluffy, all moving towards some earthshaking climax that never seems to materialize. Anyone involved in the actual process of awakening would view such frivolity the way men on a bloody battlefield view children playing war in backyards. You talk about a revolution, but revolutions aren’t like afternoon tea parties with fine china and extended pinkies, they’re hellish nightmares from which you can’t wake up. Real spirituality is a savage insurrection, the oppressed rising up in a do-or-die bid for freedom. It’s not something people do to improve themselves or earn merit or impress friends or to find greater joy and meaning in life. It’s a suicidal assault on a foe of unimaginable superiority.”⁹²

I added this long text from Jed McKenna because I want you to understand that it is tough! It is not airy-fairy feeling good stuff. It is actual warfare with the Ego! You must be relentless in your pursuit of Truth that the Ego hides from you. Otherwise, you **cannot** break the chains, you cannot be free.

Let me tell you a story. One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about **a battle that goes on inside people**. He said My son, the battle is between two wolves, inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride and superiority, it is ego.

The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy,

⁹² Jed McKenna, *Spiritual Warfare* (The Enlightenment Trilogy Book 3) (p. 27, 228).

generosity, truth, compassion and faith, it is Spirit.

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, which wolf wins?

The old Cherokee simply replied..... The one you feed.

The Ego is a veil between humans and God.”

Rumi

The Ego is relentless, and I found that it takes serious courage and war to conquer it. Any time you point a finger or look to people and things **outside of you** and make a judgement, it is the Ego; recognize your ego; get to know it really well and scrutinize it.

“The mind turned inwards is the Self; turned outwards, it becomes the ego and all the world. Cotton made into various clothes we call by various names. Gold made into various ornaments; we call by various names. But all the clothes are cotton and all the ornaments gold. The One is real, the many are mere names and forms.”⁹³

Ego is a thousand-headed beast that is quite devious and cunning. You cut one head off, another will appear in its place. You will probably never meet another foe as challenging or persistent.

***“As long as you do not extinguish your self,
the flame of ego will keep you from the experience of union.”***

Rumi

Having given you all these warnings, I will tell you that squashing the Ego is the most glorious experience. I haven't annihilated it completely yet, and it still creeps up once in a while. But I'm ever vigilant and tend to it immediately before it becomes a monster. And I feel the freedom already; the joy in my soul is truly wonderful.

***“The death of the ego in the unlimited Silence – the non-dual Truth –
and the shining forth of Self is the attainment of Oneness.
In that State of Jnana (Knowledge, All Knowing),
pure bliss will gloriously blaze forth as one's own true nature.***

Ramana Maharshi

Here's a quote from my most beloved teacher, Rumi:

***When you lose all sense of self the bonds of a thousand chains will vanish.
Lose yourself completely, return to the root of the root of your own soul.***

Rumi

And here's one more:

***“Hear this if you can: If you want to reach him You have to go beyond yourself.
And when you finally arrive at the land of absence, be silent.***

⁹³ Ramana Maharshi, “Who Am I?” Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings on how to realise the Self.”
<https://www.davidgodman.org/who-am-i-sri-ramana-maharshis-teachings-on-how-to-realise-the-self/6/>

Don't say a thing. Ecstasy, not words, is the language spoken there."

Rumi

So, build an Ego meter in your mind, get to know your Ego **really** well, face it, challenge it, scrutinize it, ignore it, let it go; whatever works for you to kill the thousand-headed beast.



2. Live Authentically

So many of us spend so much time at our jobs, doing work that we don't like, working in environments that eat away at our soul and sanity. And of course, we remain silent at work and complain to our loved ones when we come home. And so many of us are just surviving life.

To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that's all.

Oscar Wilde

Living authentically means being true to your Self, every moment of every single day, doing what you love to do. Is that possible? **YES! Absolutely!**

Here's how I did it:

A. Find your passion and live it!

"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do."

Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs said it best and so did Joseph Campbell:

"Follow your bliss; Find where it is, and don't be afraid to follow it."

Joseph Campbell,

American writer, Life-long student and teacher of the human spirit and mythology

He explains:

"If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are – if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time."⁹⁴

The Joseph Campbell Foundation cautions us that:

"Following one's bliss, as Campbell saw it, isn't merely a matter of doing whatever you like, and certainly not doing simply as you are told. It is a matter of identifying that pursuit which you are truly passionate about and attempting to give yourself absolutely to it. In so doing, you will find your fullest potential and serve your community to the greatest possible

⁹⁴ Joseph Campbell Foundation, <https://www.jcf.org/about-joseph-campbell/follow-your-bliss/>

extent.”⁹⁵

Here are two sages, among many who advise us to:

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

Confucius

And,

“Respond to every call that excites your spirit.”

Rumi

Our Gift, Our Calling

“We are here because of that unique gift that only each of us can give to the world, each in his or her own way. I cannot love the world for you or sacrifice you for its well-being. Only you can do that for yourself, as only I can do that for myself. Only each of us can give the unique gift of love inherent in our individuality.

We are here because the Big Love recognizes our value and knows what we can become, what we can give, what we can do that will bring new life, new vision, new spirit, new love to the world.

This is the primal call.

This is the background call in the lives of each of us, like the background radiation of the universe: the call to treasure and value and love one another and all the other creatures and things of the earth. It is the call to acknowledge and to act from that knowledge that each person is just as valued and just as loved as the next, and all are invited to participate in the communion of that love.”⁹⁶

So beautifully expressed! You are ALL invited to participate in the communion of Divine Love, or as Rumi and Hafez call it, Party of Lovers. What an amazing existence it is!

“Sometimes you hear a voice through the door calling you.

This turning toward what you deeply love saves you.”

Rumi

This is your soul calling you! This is YOUR CALLING!

“A calling is an organic field of energy that emerges from the deepest aspects of who you are. It is the fulfillment of what God has created you to be and do. Approaching your work as a job versus approaching it as a calling makes all the difference in whether or not you dwell in the miraculous universe.”⁹⁷

So many people are disengaged, dissatisfied, and frustrated at work; it’s become a prison for most people – mandatory serving of time! They think when I retire, I will do this and that. But

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ David Spangler, The Call, p189 Kindle Version.

⁹⁷ Marianne Williamson, The Law of Divine Compensation, <https://marianne.com/the-law-of-divine-compensation-on-work-money-and-miracles/>

you know what? If you wait that long you will not have a physical strength to do the things you love. It's too late then!

This, of course, is the trick of the Ego: it does not want you to follow your bliss. It will bring up ten thousand reasons why you shouldn't, and the most important reason is "I can't afford it!"

I spent 20 some years in golden handcuffs (the high paycheck) that kept me in an industry I did not like; it was an aggressive and highly competitive work environment that pushed people to lie and back stab. After my breakdown, I tried to go back to it. It's what made sense and what everyone told me to do because it paid so well, and I was at the height of my career. I had spent a year in Iran and India helping impoverished children and I had the best time of my life. Going back to the high-tech industry depressed me deeply and drove me to want to commit suicide.

I finally reached a point where I said, NO MORE! Even if I sleep on the streets, I'm not going to go back. I want to live a life of service, even if I have to beg! And that's when miracles started happening. Doors opened for me that I couldn't believe!

Divine Law of Compensation: Trust that you will get paid! This law is the basis of many a proverb. You reap what you sow and so on. It instills trust in us that we will be compensated for our work as long as we're open to receiving in all the many ways that the Universe can deliver. With faith in SATI's promise of prosperity for all, we need never fear the future.

The Law of Divine Compensation assures us that everything will be all right since the Universe is set up to work for us. In her book of the same name, Marianne Williamson challenges us to believe that miracles **do happen** and what is lacking can become abundant. All it takes is a shift in perspective and a faith in positive outcomes. I highly recommend her book!

No matter what your career is, you can always shift, even if slowly, to a new path that lightens up your heart and your life. And the Universe will ALWAYS help you! Believe it!

In a question and answer with Bill Moyers, Joseph Campbell expands:

BILL MOYERS: Do you ever have the sense of... being helped by hidden hands?

JOSEPH CAMPBELL: All the time. It is miraculous. I even have a superstition that has grown on me as a result of invisible hands coming all the time - namely, that if you do follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. When you can see that, you begin to meet people who are in your field of bliss, and they open doors to you. I say, follow your bliss and don't be afraid, and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be."⁹⁸

Now this is what I do:

"In each moment do exactly what you think or feel to do."

Roger Castillo

⁹⁸ Joseph Campbell Foundation, <https://www.jcf.org/about-joseph-campbell/follow-your-bliss/>

Yes! It is that simple. Don't spend time pondering what to do, about the choices you have to make, the strategies you need to use to prevent catastrophes or problems before they arise, etc. etc. The right action you need to take arises in the present moment. Remember: it is not YOUR doing! It is not YOUR decision. A decision will be made, (good or bad) and life continues to flow. So, hakuna matata!! No worries! Just go with the flow!!

When I first heard this, I wanted to scream, "Don't tell me what to do!"



But as Roger Castillo explains:

“On deeper reflection it can be seen that this statement is not so much telling you what to "do" or "not do" but rather it describes how decisions and choices have always and will continue to happen.”⁹⁹

B. Create Your 10 Commandments

I created a list of what's most important for me in my life, a list of who I AM, who I want to be and what I stand for. These are qualities or ways of being that support me, my purpose, and my passion. I look at it **every single day**, in the morning to remind me of these qualities during the day. Or some days when I feel that I have a challenge (that means Ego has crept its head up), I take the one commandment that most helps me face that challenge. It's been a really powerful tool for me.

Below are my 10 commandments that might help you create your own. Remember this is a tool that will remind you of who YOU REALLY ARE, when you're lost or feel disempowered. It can be a great compass for cloudy or rainy days.

Niloo's 10 Commandments

1. **Be in harmony** with the Tao and follow the Wu Wai; effortlessly flow with life and abandon willfulness and judgements to SATI.
2. **Be KIND to EVERYTHING and EVERYONE** including yourself, all the time with NO exception.
3. **Revere ALL of LIFE in all its expressions**, no matter what, even if you don't understand it.
4. **See the hidden beauty** of all that exists even if you don't see it. It will then reveal itself.
5. **Presume NO knowledge** of anything at all. Ask SATI to reveal its meaning.
6. **Forgive EVERYTHING** that is witnessed and experienced, no matter what.
7. **Take NO offense and have no Defense**, no matter what. Surrender causality and positionality.
8. **Live a LIFE of LOVE and selfless service** to Mother Earth and all her inhabitants.
9. **Make your life a living prayer** by intention, alignment, humility and surrender.
10. **Accept that you are supported.** You will receive ALL that is necessary for your entire journey.



⁹⁹ Roger Castillo, "How to Live" blog, https://www.rogercastillo.org/blog?748d8657_page=28&79e7546f_page=4

3. Investigate, Contemplate and Reflect

In **Awakening** I talked about meditating 5 minutes every morning to connect with yourself; and that is wonderful, but not enough. In order to update your conditioning, you need to investigate, contemplate, and reflect deeply on the concepts/pointers to the Truth.

Nowadays, loneliness is a real pandemic! Covid19 hasn't helped, but we feel very lonely even if we're surrounded by people. We fill every minute of every day with "busyness" to escape our loneliness. We spend so much time on the phone, email, social media, trying to connect, to give and receive. We check our phone or email every few minutes to see if we have a new message; or check email several times a day. But all these technologies do not alleviate our loneliness. True connection is with yourself, your spirit, and the Source.

Take time to investigate the concepts in this book in your life.

connect with your soul. Abide in I AM. Contemplate and reflect on the teachings and wisdom offered in this book.

***“When the mind, which is the cause of all cognitions
and of all actions, becomes quiescent, the world will disappear.”***

Ramana Maharshi

Both Ramana Maharshi and Nisargadatta Maharaj recommend **spending time in the self-inquiry of Who AM I?**

Ramana Maharshi explains this self-inquiry:

“By the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ The thought ‘Who am I?’ will destroy all other thoughts and, like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed. Then there will arise Self-realization.”

The I AM self-inquiry should be in sitting meditation (I have included a link below to get the full instruction). In this inquiry, you're actually looking at the entity within yourself which thinks your thoughts and which perceives your perceptions. The sense of personal identity which we have created (see **Awakening** for detail) – the “I” thought (term used by Ramana Maharshi) needs to be challenged, and it needs to be challenged repeatedly and regularly.¹⁰⁰

So, take time to be with yourself, instead of filling every moment with some activity. The wisdom of this book (world as an illusion, non-duality, non-doership concepts) needs to be digested. Set aside time for contemplation, reflection, and self-inquiry. It is a must for further spiritual growth.



¹⁰⁰ For complete instruction on the Who Am I inquiry written by Ramana Maharshi, see https://web.archive.org/web/20170303153148/http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/who_am_i.pdf

4. Take NO Offense

I first read Take No Offense in the Bible and I LOVED it.

“Make allowances for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you.

Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”

Colossians 3:13, New Living Translation Bible

And:

Blessed is [he], whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Matthew 11:6, King James Bible

Remember Jesus also said in 1 Corinthians,13:5:

Love does not keep a record of wrongs.

Now I use it as a Mantra: Take NO offense when Ego is bruised or upset with someone. Every day we are presented with opportunities to be offended; and every day we must choose whether or not to be offended.

The sound of the horn makes you jump when the driver behind you thinks you're taking too long to make the turn when they clearly can't see the cars speeding by. Your partner works late on your birthday, and your special plans are ruined. You and two of your best friends meet for a girls' night out, and the two of them keep talking about some topic you know nothing about, ignoring you for most of the evening! Oh, my favorite one: the person in front of you in the grocery store is oblivious to the long line behind them and keeps talking to the cashier as if they have no care in the world and wasting my "precious time" listening to her goddamn conversation! Ooooooh, makes my blood boil and I get road rage right there in the store!!!!

These examples may seem trivial; but most of the drama in our lives are! But even if the offense is serious remember THEY ARE NOT THE DOERS!

Taking NO offense is not a one-time decision. So, I have created a non-doership mantra that helps me "get off it" with people:

Mantra 1 – Non-doership

I am NOT the doer. She is NOT the doer. He is NOT the doer. They are NOT the doers.

The actors in the scenario of Your Life are following a script just as you are. They are acting out their roles fabulously if you're being pissed.

Don't be offended by what other people think of you

“People who insult me, are only polishing the mirror”

Rumi

It's not YOU who is pissed. It is YOUR EGO! And they are showing you where the beast is, and you want to slay it! So, instead of taking offense, thank them for their contribution to your spiritual growth. Yes, thank them!!!

“The pure Bliss of peace will shine within only for those who have lost the sense of doership. For, this foolish sense of doership alone is the poisonous seed that brings forth all evil fruits.”

Ramana Maharshi

Mantra 2 – I Take NO Offense

I take NO Offense because they are not the doers

It will take a while for non-doership to sink in. Again and again, I said **take NO offense** and the non-doership mantra, until now, I rarely take offense and if I do, it is only for a moment. My brain has been reprogrammed to what is real and that is **Love**. The constant upset, blame, anger has completely vanished from my life and WHAT A FREEEEEEEDOM! Seriously! It’s absolutely fabulous!



5. Have NO Defense

We live in a world of fear (as I explained in detail in *Awakening*.) Fear causes anger, impatience, annoyance, and they give rise to attack.

Remember what Master Yoda said:

“Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering.”



Lesson 153 of ACIM expands:

“The world provides no safety. It is rooted in attack, and all its “gifts” of seeming safety are illusory deceptions. It attacks, and then attacks again. No peace of mind is possible where danger threatens thus.

The world gives rise but to defensiveness. For threat brings anger, anger makes attack seem reasonable, honestly provoked, and righteous in the name of self-defense.”¹⁰¹

So being defensive seems a natural way of the world. But it is not the Way of Love.

There is a scene in the Matrix when Neo is sent back into the Matrix for the first time, he's driven down a familiar street with Morpheus and Trinity. At one point, he points out the car window and says "I used to eat there. Really good noodles." He realized his memories **never** actually happened and **are not** real. These memories from life, never really happened.

Neo: What does that mean?

Trinity: That the Matrix cannot tell you who you are.

So, the events in the world of illusions or holographic universe are not real, but your essence, who you really are, is not impacted at all.

This is how A Course in Miracles (ACIM) begins. It makes a fundamental distinction between the

¹⁰¹ A Course in Miracle, Lesson 153: In My Defenselessness My Safety Lies, <https://acim.org/acim/en/s/559#2:1-2> | W-153

real and the unreal, between knowledge and perception:

***Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.
Herein lies the peace of God.***

This means **only** Love is real. It's an eternal creation and nothing can destroy it. Anything that isn't love is an illusion.

“We look past dreams today, and recognize that we need no defense because we are created unassailable, without all thought or wish or dream in which attack has any meaning. Now we cannot fear, for we have left all fearful thoughts behind. And in defenselessness we stand secure, serenely certain of our safety now, sure of salvation; sure, we will fulfill our chosen purpose, as our ministry extends its holy blessing through the world.”¹⁰²

A. Avoid positionality

We are often encouraged to take a stand, whether for a cause or against an injustice. When you have a position on something and take a stand, the world creates its opposite (the world of duality explained in chapter 1). Positionality is really a rigid attitude or nature of the Ego Mind, based on beliefs that are mostly reinforced by our society. Positionalities support the dualistic nature of the World of Ten Thousand Things and reinforce and feed the Ego by creating mental postures that then have to be defended. Thinking that I am right and others are wrong, is what Ego loves to defend.

And that's how many arguments, conflicts and wars have begun.

B. Avoid Causality

Let me tell you story. A Chinese farmer and his son had a beloved stallion who helped the family earn a living. One day, the horse ran away, and their neighbors exclaimed, “Your horse ran away, what terrible luck!” The farmer replied, “Maybe so good, maybe so bad. We'll see.”

A few days later, the horse returned home, leading a few wild mares back to the farm as well. The neighbors shouted out, “Your horse has returned, and brought several horses home with him. What great luck!” The farmer replied, “Maybe so good, maybe so bad. We'll see.”

Later that week, the farmer's son was trying to break one of the mares and she threw him to the ground, breaking his leg. The villagers cried, “Your son broke his leg, what terrible luck!” The farmer replied, “Maybe so good, maybe so bad. We'll see.”

A few weeks later, soldiers from the national army marched through town, recruiting all the able-bodied boys for the army. They did not take the farmer's son, still recovering from his injury. Friends shouted, “Your boy is spared, what tremendous luck!” To which the farmer replied, “Maybe so good, maybe so bad. We'll see.”

We, in our limited view of the world cannot know of SATI's plan for ourselves OR others. We simply are not capable of comprehending the complexity of SATI's plan. Therefore, it is best that

¹⁰² ibid

we do not make up a cause-and-effect scenario, neither the positivity nor negativity of an event.

Now, there are times I used the practice of Take No Offense and Have No Defense together. They perfectly go hand in hand. As an example, people love to give unsolicited advice, because they want to make a difference and contribute to you. Doesn't that annoy you? It used to annoy the hell of me! "Do they think I'm stupid?" I used to think [Offense]. Then I would spit out a sarcastic remark about how I already know and don't need their advice [Defense.] Now, I just thank the person and bless them for caring enough to take the time and give me advice. It's been miraculous! The vibration of the whole interaction shifts to gratitude and love and that have the highest vibration.

Mantra 3 – Take NO Defense, Have NO Offense

6. Detach and Bust

In order to dismantle the persistent illusion of this world, you must detach and bust through the illusion. Detach from the past (memories, conflicts, etc.) and the future (hopes, wishes, wants.) I talked about this in **Awakening**: detach from your life story and look at it as a movie. Give closure to events of the past and think of them as a juicy story. Give up hopes, wishes, and dreams and trust in the SATI and Universe's plan for you. It is an awesome plan, believe me!! Better than anything I could have dreamed or wished for. Actually, you can always dream/wish/hope, but you must not be attached to whether you get it or not. Remember attachment to outcomes is one of the 5 causes of suffering.

A. Let go of ALL desires

*"Your radiance shines
in every atom of creation
yet our petty desires keep it hidden."*

Rumi

The World of Ten Thousand Things is a playground for our senses. Ego, in search of getting pleasure and avoiding pain, continuously desires, this, that and the other. In **Awakening**, I mentioned the poem by Lao Tzu. Here it is again:

*"Ego is a monkey catapulting through the jungle:
Totally fascinated by the realm of the senses,
It swings from one desire to the next,
One conflict to the next,
One self-centered idea to the next.
If you threaten it, it actually fears for its life."
Let this monkey go.
Let the senses go.
Let desires go.
Let conflicts go.*

***Let ideas go. (Meaning let the thoughts and strategies go)
Let the fiction of life and death go.***

***Just remain in the center, watching.
And then forget that you are there.”***

Unfortunately, wanting something means you don't have it. And as we talked about in ***Awakening***, the Universe is an echo or copy machine, what you send out is echoed back to you.



Remember this picture?

The more we want something, the stronger the vibration of wanting goes to The Field, the stronger the desire to have it comes back to you. As Roger Castillo says:

“Expectation and attachment to results are one of the main causes of suffering.”

Therefore, having desires and hoping, wishing, praying for it causes suffering. Instead, let the story of your life unfold as it was written. What is meant for you, will come to you. Repeating what Ramana Maharshi said:

***“Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may.
Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it.
This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain silent.”***

The constant wanting of material things is reinforced through mass and social media. We are a “disposable” society. We use it and throw it away and then buy again. When you realize that material things will not bring you joy and peace, you will let them go.

I have a huge storage full of stuff and mountains of things I have collected in my adult life; things I thought I absolutely needed and yet, I have lived with a single suitcase for the last 4 years, never needing any of it!

***“Passion and desire bind your Heart.
Remove the locks. Become a key, become a key”***

Rumi

So, let go of all desires and be free! Because truly:

***“When all your desires are distilled, you will cast just two votes –
to love more, and be happy.”***

Rumi

B. Avoid Entanglement and Drama

Detach yourself from the happenings/drama of the world and the people around you and just bear witness. It is soooo easy to get caught in the drama of the world, the politics, the injustice, the hurt, and the pain. The drama is constantly repeated on TV and social media that are designed to keep us entangled in the world. Since the internet, and particularly smartphones, became household commodities, mass media's impact on people and societies has increased exponentially.

“Multiple studies have found a strong link between heavy social media and an increased risk for depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, and even suicidal thoughts.”¹⁰³

And it's not just social media. Mass and social media, both profit from constant iteration of terrible news. Images of chaos and catastrophe, terrorism, wars in the world are constantly flashed on TV, mobile phones and our computers. How can we **not** get involved in the drama of the world? When we see pictures of an innocent black boy being shot to death by the police just because he was black, or see videos of thousands of dolphins being put to horrible death for no reason, or the bombing of a mosque or church by fanatics; how can we not be touched?

Here's how: You only have to remember ***the world is an illusion. It is NOT real.*** So, don't get sucked into the illusion.

Mantra 4 – It is NOT real. None of this is real.

Use the fourth mantra: ***this is not real***, over and over and it will sink in. Like when a mirage is seen, there is no point in trying to get rid of the mirage, just recognize it is not water and then there is no confusion or suffering.

This is not to say you cannot or should not be compassionate or lend a helping hand if you can. Do what you can always! The Way of Love will guide you here. If you can't help in any way, then bear witness, let it go and surrender it to SATI.

Also, another favorite of mine is:

Mantra 5 – This is not MY circus and these are not MY monkeys!



Now detangling from your own drama is a bit more difficult! Life's problems seem sooooo real and full of pain and suffering. It all seems so real, doesn't it?

One day I got into a conversation with my aunt sharing what had happened to me in the past five

¹⁰³ Helping Guide, "Social Media and Mental Health", <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/social-media-and-mental>

years, about my breakdown, the betrayals, the hardship. I went on to express the emotional pain I had felt. It all came back to me in a sudden burst of anguish. I cried bitter tears as my aunt listened to me with empathy and love.

After that conversation I went to sleep feeling exhausted and broken. I woke up in the morning thinking of the conversation. Remembering that we are all actors playing a role, I exclaimed: “Well, that was an Oscar-winning performance!” And I burst into laughter!!!

The laughter didn’t come from the fact that I had “vomited” all that pain on my poor aunt and thus experience a release. No! The laughter came from the realization that I had gotten entangled in the movie of Life of Niloo Soleimani and damn, how well I had played that role the night before.

Understanding that we’re just the actors playing the role we have chosen helps you distance yourself from the dramas of your own life. All the dramatic stories built around events drop and what is left is laughter.

C. Trust Divine Timing

It can really be upsetting when things don’t go as planned, a job falls through or a relationship doesn’t work out. We have been conditioned to expect immediate results. Like spoiled children, we often get upset when things don’t happen according to our desired timetable. You (or your Ego) want it and you want it NOW! Yes?

When you have faith and let go of expectations, you ease your own suffering. Rumi reminds you to trust the direction and timing of your life, and you will flow through the ups and downs.

***“Don’t grieve from what doesn’t come.
Some things that don’t happen keep disasters from happening.”***

Rumi

Everything that happens in your life occurs at precisely the right moment.

The Law of Divine Timing promises that right things come to you when the time is right for you; not before, not after. Everything occurs **exactly** when it is supposed to. Divine timing doesn’t work on **your** clock, but rather on the plans SATI has for you.

Trusting the Universe/SATI with choosing the timing for everything that is supposed to happen is not an easy feat, as it requires a leap of faith on your side. All events in our lives occur at a predetermined point in time, and rushing these events won’t help, nor can they be escaped from. Remember: You ARE NOT the doer! Be patient. Trust SATI to orchestrate your life, just as beautifully as nature, stars, planets, and cosmos are managed.

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

The magical web of life and the interaction of every single microcosm is perfection itself. Every

single detail has been attended to, right down to our microscopic cells and DNA. In nature, for example, seeds germinate in the spring and mature as plants in the summer; then they create more seeds in the fall and remain at rest during the winter until they germinate again in spring, completing the cycle. A seed does not germinate without completing the cycle it requires, and a plant evolves to another stage at just the right time. Trees bear fruit and take time to ripen at a particular time. Orange trees bear fruit in the winter and strawberries in the summer. And so it is with plants. Some flower in the spring, others in the summer and so on. Perfect timing is built into the DNA of Life.

“Everything shows up in Divine time. We get what we need on the schedule of a force much larger than ourselves. This invisible force moves the pieces around in its own way, in its own time, to harmonize with the perfect precision that defines every cubic inch of space and time.”

Dr. Wayne Dyer in I Can See Clearly Now

Hand in hand with perfect Diving Timing also come the miracle of synchronicities. Those fabulous experiences in which we realize how certain things happen, impeccably, so that others will have the right time to happen. When you let go and surrender to SATI, you will begin to see these synchronicities show up in your life, like magic. And it is magic!! I spoke about these miracles in Practice 1A – Follow Your Bliss. You will see things—situations, places, people, topics, ideas, opportunities—align before your eyes, to help you reach your truest potential.

“If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”

Henry David Thoreau

At first, they will shock you and then you realize it is normal occurrence when you are surrendered, that encourages you to surrender even more. This helps you live in the present moment of Now that is absolutely delicious!



7. Live a life of Service

***If you put your heart against the earth with me
In serving every creature, our Beloved will enter you from the sacred realm,
and we will be, we will be so happy.***

Rumi

In the World of Ten Thousand Things, most of us are taught that achievements and acquisitions are the definitions of a successful life. Your achievements must bring in appropriate wealth, otherwise it is worthless. And of course, having mountains of things is the proof that you have succeeded: a better car like a BMW or Mercedes, a bigger house, a bigger TV, or may be two, more credit cards with bigger balances. We work our ass off to finance our achievements and acquisitions. Meanwhile deep down we feel unsatisfied. Yes?

Achieving at any cost and amassing wealth only nurture the ego. Living for ego keeps you forever in the World of Ten Thousand Things and the ups and down of pain and pleasure. Instead, a life of service is the highest level of achievement for which one can strive, especially if one is interested in their own happiness. A life of service frees us from Ego's constant demands and self-absorption. It shifts our focus to others. Living a life of service is healing, it's inspiring, it's freeing. It is extremely joyous!

***"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know:
the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought
and found how to serve."***

Albert Schweitzer

I talked about your calling in Practice 1. Your calling is your unique version of service you can offer and gift to the world. And by the way, you do not have to leave your current job to be of service. If you shift your perspective that your life is dedicated to service, you will approach each day, each project from the heart and soul, instead of the Ego. And that in and of itself is amazing.

Remember, being of service is never tiring or draining; there is NO self-sacrifice AT ALL. It's a giving without expectation and only for the joy of it. So, it is in fact, energizing. When I worked in high-tech, I was ALWAYS tired and sick. And doctors couldn't find anything wrong with me. Ever since I started living a life of service, I can't tell you how much energy I have. I work long hours tirelessly. And after the long hours when the work is done, the satisfaction that I made a difference is immensely joyous.

When you are in the service of other beings (including animals, people, nature, all of it) you are in the service of SATI. You are an angel someone has asked for. You are the light brightening someone's life. So, don't feel badly if people remember you only when they need you. Feel privileged that you are like a candle that comes to their mind when there is darkness.

So, I strongly invite you to:

"Give your hands to serve, and your hearts to love."

Mother Teresa

Pause, Investigate and Contemplate

1. Look at the areas of your life that don't work and where there's suffering. Which of these practices can you bring to the situation to return to Love?
2. Are you willing to battle the Ego and annihilate the beast, or do you want to hang on to the drama of your life being tossed up and down like a tiny boat in the ocean?
3. Are you willing to see things differently, through the eyes of Love? Are you willing to choose to live a life of Love, instead on suffering?

4. Are you going to bring these practices to your life and apply them to your life situation?
Because These practices are what it is going to take for you to thrive with grace!

Chapter 8 – Bringing it Home

*When you search for the home of the soul,
you become the soul.*

*Wanting a taste of bread,
you become the oven.*

*Understand this much:
whatever you love and look for, you are.”*

Rumi

I began with a promise providing the wisdom necessary to allow you to blossom and thrive with grace in a tumultuous world that tosses us around like tiny boats.

In Chapter 1, we looked at our world, the world Lao Tzu calls the World of Ten Thousand Things. Everything in this world has an opposite. It is the world of duality and polarity. In this world pleasure and pain go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other.

In Chapter 2 – Spooky Action, we then looked at the science of quantum physics (QP) that demonstrates there is no “out there,” out there. In fact, many scientists now believe we live in a holographic universe and we ourselves are also holographs!

In Chapter 3 – When Harry Met Sally, we delved into spirituality and religious beliefs from all over the world and found out that they all believe this world is an illusion or dream and beyond this world exists the realm of Oneness.

In Chapter 4 – You and Me, we learned about non-duality taught by most spiritual traditions. Rumi goes beyond simple non-duality into devotional non-duality where the merging with the Source of All That Is (SATI) and the experience of Divine Love is ecstatic.

In Chapter 5 – Do We Do What We Do, Scooby Dooby Doo? I covered the concept of non-doership where we are not the doers of our thoughts, feelings, and actions. It is SATI that does everything, and we are the instruments that SATI uses to experience life.

In Chapter 6 – The Way of Love, I delved deeply in the Way of Love, that is the pathway that leads to rising above the duality of this world and the suffering brought about by the unending desires of the Ego, through Love. The Way of Love leads to the ecstatic union with the Divine.

In Chapter 7 – Breaking Free, I gave you 7 practices (in addition to the 7 given in **Awakening**) that will help you will blossom and thrive in the world, while aiding you to rise above the world of duality to experience deep joy and Divine Love.

*When a dervish has truly broken open,
that condition is not something imaginary.
The place, the self, that he or she lives in then,
becomes a royal campsite*

***better than any location,
better than existence, better than the turning universe.***

Rumi

As a spiritual practitioner/dervish of the Way of Love, the world becomes a royal campsite. Campsite/Encampment is a place with temporary accommodation consisting of huts or tents, typically for troops or nomads. Rumi uses the word encampment to reinforce that we are here temporarily, passing through, experiencing the world.

And here you are! You've made it to the end! I'm proud of you! I'm sure it took a lot of courage to get here. Welcome to the Party of Lovers!

***“This world’s existence is one night long.
There’s a great lively gathering that night,
but some people sleep through it.”***

Rumi

Life is short is such a cliché, but I will leave you with two final messages:

With life as short as a half-taken breath, don't plant anything but love.”

Rumi

And



Now go forth and thrive, dear one!

Namaste and love!



Sources, References and Recommended Stuff

The sources below that have * and are red are my highly recommended list and with ** are a **must see/read** selection.

My Spiritual Teachers

- Deepak Chopra, MD, spiritual Leader
- * Dr. Wayne Dyer, PhD, author, spiritual teacher
- * Eckhart Tolle, author and spiritual teacher
- Hafez, 12th Century Persian poet and mystic
- Joe Dispenza, PhD, neuroscientist and lecturer
- Khayyam, 11th Century Persian astronomer, scientist and poet
- * Lao Tzu, 500 BC Chinese sage and author of Tao Te Ching
- Marianne Williamson, author and spiritual teacher
- Neal Donald Walsch, author and spiritual teacher
- Nisargadatta Maharaj, 20th Century Indian sage and Advaita Master
- Ramana Maharshi, 20th Century Indian sage and Advaita Master
- Ramesh Balsekar, a disciple of Nisargadatta Maharshi
- Stephen Davis, non-duality teacher and author of Butterflies Are Free to Fly
- ** Roger Castillo, non-duality teacher, disciple of Ramesh Balsekar
- * Rumi, 13th Century Persian Poet and mystic
- Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Master and Global Spiritual Leader

Books used:

- * A Course in Miracles (ACIM) – Helen Schucman, scribe
- Back to the Truth: 5000 Years of Advaita – Denise Waite
- ** Butterflies are Free to Fly – Stephen Davis
- Divine Intoxication & Rumi – Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee
- * Tao Te Ching – Lao Tzu
- The Enlightenment Trilogy – Jed McKenna
- The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe – Lynn Taggart
- The Hindu Mind: Fundamentals of Hindu Religion – Bansi Pandit
- The Holy Bible (various versions)

Great Movies, TV Series and Videos to Watch

These shake the foundation of reality and help unravel the illusion of this world or at least they make you contemplate the nature of reality!!

- * Inception (2010) – Movie
- ** Matrix (1999)
- Minority Report with Tom Cruise (2001) – Movie
- * Revolver with Jason Statham – Movie
- * Star Trek – Deep Space 9, Far Beyond the Stars, Season 6, Episode 13 – TV Series
- Star Trek – The Next Generation, Memory Alpha, Season 1, Episode 16 – TV Series

- * Star Trek – The Next Generation, Ship in A Bottle, Season 6, Episode 12 – TV Series
- * *The Holographic Universe – 5 videos by Stephen Davis
(<https://www.butterfliesfree.com/holographic-universe-workshops/>)
- The 100 – TV Series
- * Thirteenth Floor (1999) – Movie
- * Vanilla Sky with Tom Cruise (2001) – Movie
- * West World with Yul Brynner (1973) – Movie
- ** What the Bleep Do We Know!? (2004) – Movie
- What the Bleep!? – Down the Rabbit Hole (2006) – Movie

About The Author



Spiritual and Career coach and mentor, and a practitioner of A Course in Miracles, Buddhism, Sufism and Taoism and non-duality teachings

I have worked for over 30 years in prominent corporations and high-tech companies in Silicon Valley, leading projects, working on highly complex cross-functional teams, organizing events and managing diverse people across the globe. Additionally, I have volunteered for many years while working, most recently in the slums of India developing an e-Learning computer science curriculum and teaching impoverished children. All of these experiences have given me a diverse perspective on life and people. It is one of my greatest joys to see beyond the surfaces of people's situations, into their beautiful souls, and to love, honor and celebrate them.

There was time I had everything I ever wanted. I was a successful professional, climbing the corporate ladder. I traveled all over the world. I studied new and ancient sacred texts as well as many spiritual and personal-growth teachings along the way.

Until life threw me a curve ball and I lost everything, my job, my home, and guardianship of my son.

I knew it was time to stop. To breathe. To look within.

I took all my corporate experience and spiritual knowledge and condensed them into specific practical everyday practices and methodology. It has taken me 4 years to revise and refine my work, all the while applying the principals to myself and my clients. These practices have helped me, and many clients heal, and create a new life; a life of serenity and joy in every moment.

And now the gift that was given to me by Spiritual Teachers all around the world and Corporate Mentors, is offered to you in my books and workshops. May this Gift of Love and Awakening reach you and extend beyond us to envelop the entire planet and all its beautiful inhabitants.

